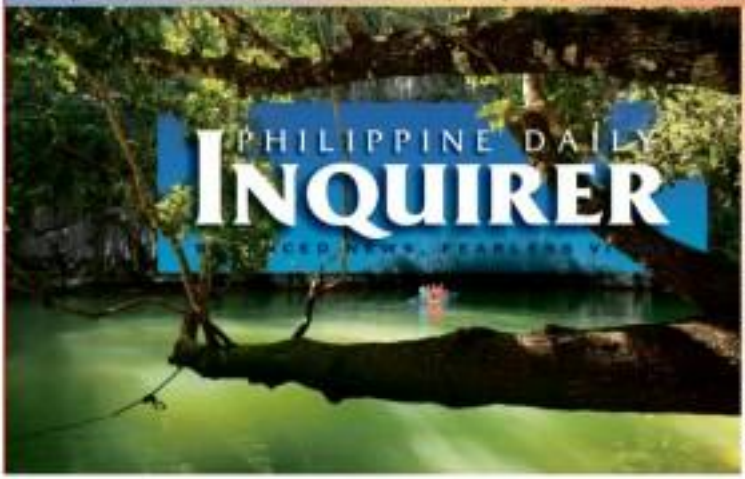
Tuesday, March 8, 2011 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 26 / No. 90 P18 | www.inquirer.net | Mobile Alert: Txt REGISTER to 646



Battlefield for green warriors

PUERTO PRINCESA—For women, the province of Palawan seems like paradise, but for environmentalists, the island feels more akin to a battlefield.

Murders and threats on what is presented as the final frontier of Asia's most ecological biodiversity are a blemish of a struggle across the country where dozens of environment campaigners have been killed over the past decade.

Father of five "Dax" Emry Ortega became the latest casualty in late January when a hit man shot him in the head while he was browsing in a

DETAILS/A4

A TOURIST boat enters an underground river in Puerto Princesa in this photo taken on Feb. 10. Despite threats, environmentalists pursue their campaign to safeguard the natural wonders and resources of Palawan island and other areas from being pillaged. AFP

Noy to LP: Impeach her

'No turning back; we should win this battle'

By Christine O. Avendaño and Cynthia D. Balana

SAYING that Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez had been "given so many chances" to do her job but failed to do it, President Aquino yesterday gave the go-signal for members of the ruling Liberal Party in the House of Representatives to initiate her impeachment.

Mr. Aquino, who is the Liberal Party chair, issued the marching orders at a luncheon meeting with party mates on the eve of a crucial vote by the House justice committee that would decide whether the impeachment complaint against Gutierrez would be sent for plenary debate.

Iloilo Rep. Neil Tupas Jr. yesterday said an overwhelming majority of the members of the House committee on justice would find Gutierrez "probable

P/A2/A4

Ombudsman employees rally 'round Morci / A2

CHANGING OF THE GUARD President Aquino (second from left) arrives for Monday's turnover-of-command at Camp Aguinaldo. His (from left) Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin, incoming Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Ricardo Diaz Jr. and outgoing chief Gen. Ricardo David.

Gen. Oban vows to slay Goliath of graft in AFP

Dona Z. Pazdiogan

MORE COMICS a soldier who thinks he can slay a modern day Goliath with a slingshot and two stones.

Assuming the post of chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Lt. Gen. Eduardo Oban Jr. yesterday promised he would promote all military bets from lofty hands, prosecute corrupt officers, tighten rules on procurement, pursue the AFP's modernization program, and step up efforts at winning the peace.

A roundtrip coming from

NEWS/A4

10 soldiers insist top botanist killed in legitimate encounter / A6

13,000 Filipinos urged to evacuate as fighting escalates

By Jerry E. Esplanada and TJ Burgonio

AS LIBYA edges toward civil war, the Aquino administration is urging some 13,000 Filipinos still in the North African country to leave immediately, officials said yesterday.

Foreign Undersecretary Rafael Seguis told a news briefing that the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Labor and Employment had raised the alert level in Libya from No. 3, or voluntary repatriation, to No. 4, which strongly urged Filipinos to depart.

Seguis said the situation had become "very dangerous" in Tripoli and areas around the Libyan capital.

"We can't force people to get out of Libya, but we're urging to sometime them to leave," he said.

More than 211,000 foreign workers have fled Libya's violence and hundreds of those undecisive are struggling to get out, an official of the International Organization for Migration said in Geneva.

According to Seguis, six teams now in Libya will conduct "mop-up operations"—as the security situation permits—this week until Saturday in areas other than Tripoli, Benghazi and other coastal areas regarded as violence.

FLORE KLAPPERS/A4

18 Albayanon coming home from Libya / A6

Soccer, not gunboat, diplomacy in Spratlys

By Dona Z. Pazdiogan

A NEW KIND of diplomacy in the disputed Spratlys is at the works.

And Filipino soldiers stationed on Philippine-occupied islands in the Spratlys are looking forward to engaging their counterparts from the five other state claimants to the oil-rich specks in the South China Sea.

It is called football—not gun-

KOCHI/A6

Gadhafi forces advance on rebel-held oil port

RAS LANUF, Libya—Forces loyal to strongman Moammar Gadhafi advanced on the rebel-held oil port of Ras Lanuf on Monday in a counterattack that forced residents in Ber and rebels to hide their weapons in the desert.

The Libyan Army was moving east down the strategic Mediterranean coastal road from the occupied town of Ras Lanuf, heading toward Ras Lanuf which is about 60 kilometer away and which has a major oil complex, witnesses told Reuters.

A Reuters correspondent saw Gadhafi's forces about 3 km east of Ras Lanuf on Sunday evening, suggesting the Libyan leader's troops were making slow but steady progress.

"I went to Ras Lanuf and about 20 km beforehand I saw

AGENCY/A4

WHAT'S INSIDE

ENTERTAINMENT / D4
Jazz legends Bob James, Hubert Laws play in Manila

ENTERTAINMENT / D1
Rock station opens door to young bands with new songs

NEWS / A2
P-Noy to take up trade, anticrime fight with leader of Indonesia

WORLD / A22
Gulf nations offer money, jobs to assuage protesters

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY Mostly sunny and warm with isolated rainshowers during the afternoon or evening

Baguio	Mostly cloudy	Iloilo	Mostly cloudy
Laoag	Mostly cloudy	Cebu	Mostly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly cloudy	Dumaguete	Mostly cloudy
Legazpi	Mostly cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly cloudy
Catarman	Mostly cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Mostly cloudy
Tacloban	Mostly cloudy	Davao	Mostly cloudy

Source: PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration)

6/42 LOTTO
1 DRW 15 22
2 DRW 2 20
3 DRW 9 5
SUERTRES
1 DRW 4 9 0
2 DRW 8 8 6
3 DRW 6 4 1

FOUR DIGIT Swertres
3 1 0 1

MEGALOTTO 6/45
3 4 6 22 30 32
P27,587,136.60

6/55 GRAND LOTTO
2 26 31 35 51 55
P32,913,568.80

GETTE TAYO Tues-Thu-SATTO, sorted by MAY. PCSO Winners

P-Noy, Susilo to take up fight vs crime

By Philip C. Tubeza

JAKARTA—Flying commercial, President Aquino was expected to arrive here late last night for the first of two state visits this week to key Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) allies.

Mr. Aquino will meet with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and sign several bilateral agreements, including one on fighting transnational crime. He will also meet members of the Filipino community and key Indonesian businessmen before proceeding to Singapore to monitor for his second state visit.

The President, boarding a 53-man delegation, was scheduled to depart Manila at 6:55 p.m. on a Cebu Pacific flight and arrive at 11:40 p.m. at the Soekarno Hatta International Airport here. He is booked at the Grand Hyatt Jakarta.

"President Aquino will meet with (Indonesian president Susilo)Yudhoyono and they will discuss fulsome cooperation, maritime boundaries, delimitation and other matters," the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said in a statement.

The President will also witness the signing of three cooperative agreements, namely on basic education, sports and combating transnational crimes, the DFA said.

The state visits follow the Asean tradition of new heads of state paying courtesy visits to fellow Asean leaders.

Asean is composed of Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Burma (Myanmar).

This morning, this business is scheduled to lay a wreath at the Kalibata National Heroes Cemetery before proceeding to Istana Merdeka, the presidential palace, for the official welcome ceremony and arrival honors.

The President and his party will pay a courtesy call on President Yudhoyono before the two sides sit down for a 45-minute bilateral meeting and the signing of the agreements. The two leaders will then hold a joint press conference.

In the afternoon, Mr. Aquino will visit the Universitas Indonesia Hasanuddin, which will confer an honorary degree on him. He will proceed to a meeting with the Filipino community.

In the evening, the President will attend a state banquet to be hosted by Yudhoyono at Istana Negara, another presidential palace.

Meet with business leaders

Before leaving for Singapore tomorrow, Mr. Aquino will hold separate Business Guides, chair of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Aburizal Bakrie, chair of the Indonesia-Philippine Business Council.

He will also have meetings with other Indonesian business leaders, including Anthony Salim of the Salim Group, Anindya Bakrie of the Bakrie Group, Patrick Walujo of Northstar Equity Partners, Maritime Minister of Planet Internusa Group, Samhaeng Heavy Equipment of PT (Hanil) Internusa THE, and Pongpo Pangaran of the Bumi Oil& gas group.

According to Makarudung, the members of Aquino's delegation include Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario, Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima, Trade Secretary Gregorio Domingo, Energy Secretary Jose Almendras, Philippine Sports Commission Chair Ricardo Garcia, Philippine National Police Director General Raul Bacalzo, and Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Teresita Ging Deles.

Executive Secretary Paquito Ochoa Jr. said the government was spending P12.27 million for the two state visits.

Trade between the two countries was about $12.29 billion in 2009, with a balance of $1.11 billion in favor of the Philippines.

Indonesia also hosts about 7,000 Filipinos, most of whom work as many of them holding managerial or supervisory positions in both local and multinational companies in the country. There are as many as 10 million Filipinos worldwide as in 2008, 9.688 as report from Christine O. Avendaño

Ligot wife, bro-in-law on watch list

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice has placed Belinda Yambao-Ligot and her brother, Edgardo Yambao, on the immigration watch list, restricting their right to travel while the Senate investigation into corruption in the military is ongoing.

"This office, under careful evaluation, finds the request of Sen. Teofisto Guingona III for the issuance of an HDO (Hold Departure Order) against Belinda Yambao-Ligot and Silvestre T. Yambao meritorious," said the DOJ in a Feb. 24 order signed by Assistant Chief State Counsel Ramon Bernardez.

Ligot, her husband, former military comptroller Lt. Gen. Jacinto Ligot, and her brother are facing charges of unexplained wealth before the Sandiganbayan.

The immigration order was based on a Senate resolution directing the Blue Ribbon and other committees to investigate, in aid of legislation, the circumstances surrounding the plea bargain agreement between government prosecutors and retired Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia who is charged with plunder.

Government prosecutors, meanwhile, have asked the Sandiganbayan for a writ of attachment on the assets of Ligot, his wife and relatives to prevent them from transferring these to other parties while their forfeiture case is pending. Willies Oliven and Leila B. Salaverria

₱7B for homes for soldiers, cops

By Christine Cuizon
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BACOLOD CITY—How President Jr. joined Army and yesterday that P7 billion from the President's Social Fund (PSF) would be made available for low-cost housing projects for soldiers and policemen.

However, for soldiers and police, there would not be less as ₱300,000, said Binay during the launch of the "Bahaybai" caravan of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council in the Negros Country Club.

Binay, also HUDCC chair, held a dialogue with members of the Philippine Military Academy Class of Sunday said 20,000 housing units would benefit from 16 with 4,000 units to be built in Negros, another presidential palace.

Binay, who also attended the PMA graduation, said the PSF budget target would be initially divided between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police.

"For me now, the President has given us [an initial] ₱2 billion. The rest will be released if as we deliver on the soldiers's homes in eight months," Binay said.

He said HUDCC has given itself a target of 270,000 houses, including those for informal settlers, members of coastal communities and government employees.

The government has a backlog of 3.7 million housing units, he said.

Binay said all local governments would be asked to identify two-hectare lots that could be used for socialized housing projects for soldiers and policemen and for subsidized ones.

But he said he prefers socialized housing areas to cover as much as five hectares so it could accommodate 500 houses.

"We are now simplifying the requirements for housing units that will not make you need for a year to avail of the house and lot," Binay said.

He also urged local governments to consider designing and financing their own home mortgage programs to support the government's shelter program.

Because soldiers and policemen are consigned regularly initial housing programs designed for them proved difficult to enforce, said Antonio Ariña, Baguio branch manager of the Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF or Pag-ibig Fund).

"It was hard to grant housing loans to policemen or soldiers, who could not keep their families retired income terms or pension (because of their assignments), so we [now] have a group financing program for them," he said.

ASIAN HOSPITAL, INC.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS OF ASIAN HOSPITAL, INC.

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS:

Please be advised that the annual meeting of the stockholders of ASIAN HOSPITAL, INC. (the "Corporation") will be held on May 02, 2011, Monday, at 10:00 a.m. at the Conference Facility, Asian Hospital and Medical Center, 2205 Civic Drive, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City, with the following agenda:

AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Certification of Notice and Quorum
III. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on April 26, 2010
IV. Presentation of the Report of the Chief Executive Officer
V. Presentation of the Audited Financial Statements of the Corporate Matters for the Fiscal Ended 2010
VI. Ratification of the Corporate Acts of the Board of Directors since April 26, 2010
VII. Election of Directors for 2011 to 2012
VIII. Appointment of External Auditor for 2011
IX. Adjournment

Stockholders who may not be able to attend the aforesaid meeting in person but wish to participate through a proxy may send a Proxy Instrument to the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. of April 22, 2011, Monday, at the following address:

KENNETH G. GONZALES
ASIAN HOSPITAL, INC.
c/o the Proxy Syllgia per Center, 1120 Filinvest Alaska, Muntinlupa City

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CORPORATION IS NOT SOLICITING PROXIES.

With respect to the election of directors (Item VII of the Agenda), stockholders who wish to nominate candidates for directors, including independent directors, must submit their nominations to the Nominations Committee at the following address not later than 5:00 p.m. of March 18, 2011:

THE NOMINATION COMMITTEE
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ASIAN HOSPITAL, INC.
4th Floor, Asian Hospital and Medical Center, 2205 Civic Drive, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City, Fax No. 878-4710

All nominations should include: (i) the signature of the nominating stockholder; (ii) acceptance by the nominee; (iii) curriculum vitae of the nominee, (iv) a statement that the nominee has all the qualifications and is not one of the disqualifications provided for in Section 3 of the Corporation's Manual of Corporate Governance, Section 38 of the Securities Regulation Code, SRC Rule 38, SEC Memorandum Circular No. 16-02 dated April 5, 2002 and SEC Memorandum Circular No. 16-02 dated November 26, 2002; (v) information on the relationship of the nominee to the stockholder supporting the nomination; and (vi) an undertaking about the nominee's qualifications.

The Corporation will be sending materials on the 2011 Annual Stockholders' Meeting to all stockholders of record. For this purpose, stockholders are requested to inform the Corporation promptly of any change in their mailing address by sending a notice with the details of their new mailing address to the Office of the Corporate Secretary of the 3rd Floor, AgriCenter Center, 1120 Filinvest Alabang, Muntinlupa City. No stockholders who have not been receiving notices from the Corporation. It is possible that their mailing address on record is not updated and they should notify the Corporation of their current mailing address as soon as possible. Stockholders are likewise requested to advise the Corporation from time to time of any further changes in their mailing address as all notices and communications to stockholders can be sent effectively.

March 07, 2011

EMMANUEL L. GACASAN
Assistant Corporate Secretary

United Auctioneers, Inc.
MARCH 22, 23 & 24, 2011
(TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY)
INSPECTION DATES:
MAR. 19, 20 & 21, 2011

Heidi admits she wants to head COA

LUCENA CITY—Former state auditor Heidi Mendoza has admitted that she wants to be the next chair of the Commission on Audit.

"I'm praying for it," she said, in reply to a question at a student forum at Sacred Heart College, her alma mater, in this city on Monday.

Mendoza, however, said President Aquino had yet to renew his offer of a government post for her.

At the time, Mendoza had said that she did not wish to return to government service. But she has since changed her mind.

At a forum earlier in the day at Manuel L. Quezon University Foundation, Mendoza said it was OK if she did not get a government post. "I can always go back to the private sector."

COA Chair Reynaldo Villar tendered his resignation in a letter to President Aquino on Feb. 23, effective upon the appointment of a successor.

Mendoza was nominated for COA chair in 2009 but she was edged out by other nominees.

Mendoza has blown the whistle on corruption in the military, exposing malfeasance in its highest levels.

As for how students could join her anticorruption crusade, she answered: "Follow the dictates of your conscience." *Delfin T. Abellart Jr, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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House accepts Singson's resignation, fills 1-Utak seat

By Gil Cabacungan

THE HOUSE of Representatives yesterday accepted the resignation of Ilocos Sur Rep. Ronald Singson, who was recently convicted of drug trafficking in Hong Kong.

The 42-year-old Singson, who is serving an 18-month prison sentence in Ge-Chimen territory, was officially dropped from the rolls of the 2010-member House of Representatives after he sent in his resignation letter.

"I hereby instruct the secretary general to drop his name (Singson) from the rolls of the House of Representatives," Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. said at the opening of yesterday's session.

Belmonte said he was acting on the resignation letter of Singson dated Feb. 28.

Singson had initially reported domestic by his colleagues for him to quit after Hong Kong authorities arrested him 15 July last year with 6.67 grams of cocaine and two tablets of the sedative nitrazepam.

House members warned that if he did not quit, he would be kicked out in a potentially divisive voting process.

In his letter to the chamber from his prison cell last week, Singson, a part-time concert promoter and music channel operator, said he was quitting not because of pressure from his own colleagues.

"Rather, my resignation is a fulfillment of my promise to my father who has all the right to make the first and hardest decision because it was his name and honor that was mercilessly dragged into the conquest," he said.

The legislator is one of the children of former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

The older Singson is also a former congressman and national security adviser. He is best known for spilling the beans on illegal gambling payoffs that led to the toppling of President Joseph Estrada in 2001.

House Resolution 1049 has been filed calling for special elections in Singson's district to choose his replacement.

A council seat in Congress can be filled up to one year before the next regular election through a special poll called by vote of its members.

The House membership will remain at 283 as a new representative from the party-list group 1-United Transport Coalition (1-Utak) was sworn in by Belmonte yesterday.

Hermon Mercado became the the 1-Utak representative after the group's first named representative, former Defense Secretary Angelito Reyes, committed suicide last month.

Mercado is president of the South Luzon Bus Operators Association and the owner of HM Transport which plies the Lagun-Manila route.

Meanwhile, a move by some lawmakers to clean up the House's image after Singson's drug conviction fizzled out yesterday after only three (3) congressmen who pledged to undergo voluntary drug testing showed up for the examination at the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency.

Representatives Alfredo Benitez of Negros Occidental, Teodoro Apliyag of Davao party-list and Oscar Samsaton of Camarines submitted their urine samples.

Benitez said the lawmakers who agreed to participate but were no-shows were Mercedes E. Alvarez of Negros Occidental, Ben Evardone of Eastern Samar (reported absent because of canceled flights), Jesus Crispin Remulla of Cavite, PJ Ejercito of San Juan, Mark Villar of Las Pinas, Rufo Alain Nograles of Davao City, and Mel Senen Sarmiento of Western Samar (reported absent because of previous engagements). With a report from AFP

PAL employees set to strike over lack of CBA

By Jerome Aning

THE FILIPINO airline employees Association (Palea) yesterday filed an order notice of strike over Philippine Airlines (PAL) management's purported refusal to come to the bargaining table.

The union representing the airlines' ground crew accused management of unfair labor practice in refusing to hold negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA).

The strike notice was filed at 10:50 a.m. before the National Conciliation and Mediation Board, an agency of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

"It has been six months since Palea submitted its CBA proposal to PAL. Moreover, it has been 12 years since the CBA mechanism that should have lasted only 10 years. PALs workers have suffered all through that time as we have not been able to improve our wages, benefits and working conditions. Management is engaging in unfair labor practices for refusing to bargain with Palea as the sole and exclusive bargaining agent," Palea president Crecy Rivera told reporters.

Rivera said Palea submitted its CBA proposal to PAL president Jaime Bautista on Oct. 8, 2010.

Rivera explained that in 1998, both sides agreed not to hold CBA negotiations for 10 years as a condition for the reopening of the airline and as a requirement for its rehabilitation.

PAL management had yet to comment on the strike notice as press time.

Last year, PAL approved 900+ plan to outsource about 3,000 jobs held by Palea members. The union filed a notice of strike then, but it was averted after Malacañang intervened and conducted an arbitration.

Rivera, who is also vice president of the labor group Partido ng Manggagawa, said that on Jan. 27 this year, Bautista asked the union to submit its list of negotiators for the CBA talks, and Palea did so on Jan. 31.

"But then PAL made an abrupt turnaround and in a Feb. 16 letter to Palea announced that it would only enter CBA negotiations after it had implemented the outsourcing plan which remains suspended as per the assumption of jurisdiction by the Office of the President," Rivera said.

"The CBA negotiations and the so-called outsourcing plan are two separate issues. PAL has a duty to bargain as provided for in the Labor Code and it is illegal to refuse to do so because of an impending plan to lay off union officers and members. The right to collective bargaining is moreover enshrined in the Constitution and protected by the International Labor Organization's Convention 98," Rivera said.

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FVR, Taiwan veep seek end to row

FORMER President Fidel V. Ramos and the vice president of Taiwan have called on their respective governments to resolve the deportation row between them that has been percolating for two months.

The Taiwan government-run Central News Agency reported that Ramos and Vice President Vincent Siew made the call during a breakfast meeting on the last day of Ramos' private trip to the island.

During his five-day visit, Ramos attended a golf tournament and led a delegation to three Taiwanese cities in search of business ventures.

Chief executive Matthew Lee, director general of the Taiwan Foreign Authority's East Asian and Pacific affairs department, is saying that Siew reiterated to Ramos Taipei's stand that Manila's deportation to China of 14 Taiwanese nationals suspected of cyber fraud was illegal.

Siew, according to Lee, also called on Philippine authorities to work with Taiwan and its northern neighbor could continue to build their longstanding friendship," the CNA quoted Lee as saying.

Ramos apparently enjoys much favor with the Taiwanese. His father, Narciso Ramos, in 1950 set up the Philippines' first mission in Taipei, serving as ambassador up to 1960.

When he was president, Ramos' Taiwanese counterpart made a private visit to Subic that China de-

Antonio Basilio, managing director of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office, which handles Philippine affairs on the island, was also quoted by CNA as saying that the two sides were "close to a solution."

Jerome Aning

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10 soldiers insist top botanist killed in legitimate encounter

By Nikko Dizon

CALM AND COLLECTED in their green Army uniforms, 10 soldiers implicated in the killing of top botanist Leonard Co appeared on Monday at the preliminary investigation of the murder charges filed against them by the victim's family in the Department of Justice (DOJ).

In an interview with reporters, 1st Lt. Ronald Gilchinar maintained that a legitimate encounter took place between his men and communist insurgents in the mountains of Barangay Leyjin, on Nov. 11, 2010.

He recounted that he and his troops were in an operation and were walking toward their "objective" when they saw the presence of "three armed (men)."

The officer said he would base his statements on a report of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), which indeed no encounter on that day."

Atty. Dan Odchimar, those who attended Monday's hearing were 2nd Lt. Cameron Perez, Cpl. Marlon Mears, and Private First Class Albert Bernardino, Mark Joshua Dalisay, Porfirio Bago Bautista, Gil Gatmeng, Alex Apostol and William Rubi.

The DOJ panel led by Assistant State Prosecutor Evangeline Sarne thanked the Department of National Defense and the Armed Forces for acting on the panel's request to facilitate the appearance of the soldiers. Last week, the soldiers failed to show up, saying they did not have the resources to travel from Leyte province to Manila.

Names of all involved

Lawyer Evelyn Urosa, counsel for the Co family, said the military should present the rest of the battalion members who took part in the military operation.

There had been a discrepancy in the number of soldiers who were involved as claimed by both parties. Urosa said 28 or 40 soldiers joined the operation based on police records in Leyte, but Odchimar said there were only 26 of them.

Urosa said she would waive any last request for the listed witnesses to submit a complete list of those in the 19th Infantry Battalion's Charlie Company who figured in the Nov. 11 encounter at the Energy Development Corp. (EDC) compound in Kananga town in Leyte while Co and his team were conducting a research.

"The AFP (top officials) has an obligation to disclose the names of the soldiers. That is a state duty ... because they claim it was a legitimate military operation," she said.

Failing to establish the identities of the remaining John Does would result in an "incomplete investigation," she added.

But Sarne told the panel that naming the rest of the soldiers before the filing of the consolidated information would be "premature." He stressed that the members of the 19th IB were undertaking counterinsurgency military operations.

Three lawyers from the AFP also attended the hearing.

'Surrender all firearms'

Urosa said she would present before the surrender of all the soldiers' firearms. She said her client's family "is not the one who approach" to determine who among them fired them.

"They say that only nine (weapons) were fired. We don't take it as truth but as a mere claim," the lawyer said.

Atty. Perez said the soldiers would be present at all preliminary hearings until the panel resolves the case.

P-Noy to Liberal Party: Impeach Gutierrez

From page A1

guilty" of betrayal of public trust when they vote today on the two impeachment complaints against him.

The President said members of the Liberal Party were "in a crossroads," pointing out that the Commission has given members of the House the right to investigate if someone did something wrong.

"If there's a probable cause, it is your obligation to file the articles of impeachment and bring them to the Senate," he told party mates.

The first impeachment complaint charged Gutierrez with betraying the public trust and with culpable violation of the Constitution for her dismal performance vis-à-vis the issues in connection with the death of Navy Ensign Philip Pestaño and the alleged behind Network deal with Chinese ZTE Corp., among other issues.

The second complaint cited Gutierrez's failure to act promptly on cases like the P728-million fertilizer fund scam and the Maguindanao Election scandal with the Commission on Elections that the Supreme Court voided.

No turning back

Mr. Aquino said there was no turning back. "We crossed the Rubicon a long time ago," he said, adding that the people should rein this battle.

A one-third vote (95) of the 283-member House is needed to elevate the impeachment case to the Senate for trial.

Although the Liberal Party has 85 members in the House, it can easily enlist the support of lawmakers belonging to other political parties who are part of the ruling coalition.

There are only 34 opposition lawmakers in the House.

Mr. Aquino said the Office of the Ombudsman had been used as a "political tool" for so long.

He noted that one's case would be fast tracked if he or she was an enemy of the former administration.

"But if you are a friend of the former administration, your case will be delayed, and nothing will be found. In the end, you can even raise (the) charges," Mr. Aquino said.

The President was apparently referring to former military comptroller Carlos Garcia whose plunder charge was reduced to direct bribery and money laundering charges after he entered into a plea bargain deal with special prosecutors of the Office of Ombudsman.

"The (concerned) has been given so many chances. The brilliant aside—How many years did it take (the Ombudsman) to start investigating? How many people before the ban of jueteng at the end of the day, there is somebody who will lose, done everything," the President said.

He reminded the lawmakers of their obligation to the people who elected them. "The choice is simple: Let us leave behind the worn system. The proof is there and let us stand by it. Let us help each other remain on the straight path," he said.

Excerpts of the speech of the President at the meeting were released by Malacañang last night, just a few hours after he left for wedding state visits to Indonesia and Singapore.

Obligation

Communications Secretary Ricky Carandang, who attended the luncheon, said the President had told Liberal Party lawmakers, governors and mayors that they had an "obligation" to pursue the impeachment case against Gutierrez.

Carandang said that after the speech, a congressman stood up to move that the President's stand on the issue be a party stand and that they all agreed.

Presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda, who also attended the luncheon, said Mr. Aquino "in broad terms" reminded they had to "face up to the commitments and promises they made to the people."

Lacierda said Mr. Aquino received applause and several standing ovations during his speech at the luncheon that was closed to the media for coverage.

House vote

Tupas, chair of the committee on justice, said the votes on the determination of probable cause would likely be the same as the votes cast when committee members first filed the complaints sufficient in form and substance in September 2010.

The committee voted 41-31 on the first impeachment complaint filed by the group of former Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel, and 42-31 on the second impeachment complaint filed by the group of Bayan Reps Teddy Casiño and Neri Colmenares.

"There is a very strong sentiment among members that Gutierrez should be probably guilty as charged. Remember the votes before on motions to dismiss and substance were 41-32 and 42-32, respectively. It will be the same, more or less," Tupas told the local media.

There are 55 regular members of the committee and 26 ex-officio members who can also vote, but according to Tupas, the proponents of determining the majority, the ex-officio members will not be included in Tuesday's voting. As chair, Tupas can only vote when there is a tie.

Tupas said he did not expect Gutierrez to appear at the hearing before the voting.

Probable cause

He said the committee had adopted the classical definition of probable cause, which is "to determine whether there are sufficient grounds to engender a well-founded belief that an impeachable offense may have been committed and that respondent is probably guilty thereof and should be held for trial."

Tupas said the complaint for culpable violation of the Constitution was adequately attested to by the signatures of at least one-third of the members of the House.

"So actually there is only one, which is betrayal of public trust as it already sustained culpable violation of the Constitution," he said.

If Gutierrez does not appear at today's hearing which is scheduled to start at 9:30 a.m., the committee members will be allowed to enter a clarification before the voting, Tupas said.

But if Gutierrez will appear and affirm her pleadings, voting may take place in the afternoon of the morning of the next day, he added.

Gutierrez has the Friday deadline given by the committee for her to file her answer to the allegations in the complaints.

In her pleading, she said all the allegations against her were "devoid of factual and legal basis."

Under the rules of the committee, Gutierrez has to appear to affirm her pleadings. "Otherwise, it will just be treated as a mere scrap of paper if she does not appear," Tupas said.

Ombudsman employees rally 'round Merci

By Leila B. Salaverria

EMPLOYEES of the Office of the Ombudsman are praying for Merci.

Yesterday, they came out to support their beleaguered chief holding a program during lunch break to extol her virtues, thank her for the benefits she had showered upon them and denounce what they said was the unfair treatment she was getting from the House impeachment panel.

The personal spokesperson of Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez said lawmakers wanted to remove Gutierrez to replace her with a friendlier Ombudsman because a number of their wives were being eyed to be appointed in the agency.

Around 150 employees, all dressed in black in support of the agency's confirmation of ball and launched a signature campaign in Gutierrez's favor.

They plan to hold a similar program today when the House justice committee is scheduled to start the preliminary investigation of probable cause that Gutierrez betrayed the public trust. She earlier said she was not inclined to appear before the committee.

"We, the officers and members of the Ombudsmen Employees Association, stand in support of the Honorable Ombudsman Merceditas N. Gutierrez. We urge you to continue your efforts in bringing justice and the reign of corruption that threatens the very existence of public service," the employees' statement read.

Most employees of the Ombudsman's central office have signed the letter.

They also said that they initiated these actions on their own.

Director for Luzon Wilfred Candelaria said the agency's employees loved Gutierrez, held her in very high esteem and knew what she achieved during her office.

"We are bombarding the very gates of heaven with our most fervent prayers and supplication that God himself, the God of truth, justice and righteousness will be her own protector and defender, and that God will grant her a double portion of strength and courage so that in the end, when all the details of political intrigue and machinations have all gone, we will see her standing tall, strong and untowned," Candelaria said during the program.

Deputy Special Prosecutor Aleta Sison said the impeachment case was not Gutierrez's fight alone, but also that of the agency and its people. "Our repression is at stake," Sison said.

He said Gutierrez had not initiated a letter to defend anyone, contrary to what her critics claimed.

Soccer, not gunboat, diplomacy in Spratlys

From page A1

boat—diplomacy, although the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) is also dispatching a vessel or two in the area to hook up with a PR-Ipsos survey, ship reportedly requested by two Chinese patrol boats last week.

Lt. Sen. Juancho Sabbas, head of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Western Command (Wescom), came up with the idea of playing football with Vietnamese soldiers stationed in the area to defuse tension.

Based in Puerto Princesa City, Wescom is responsible for the province of Palawan and the Philippine islands in the Spratlys.

Sabbas said the first round would be played for three days on Pag-asa (Thitu) Island which is occupied by the Philippines, while the next round could be played in the Vietnamese-occupied Johnson (Southwest Cay) Island.

He said he had formally written the Vietnamese Embassy about holding the friendly event next month.

But upon advice of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the games were postponed to avoid any misunderstanding while negotiations were being sent to troops from China, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei who have also laid claim over islands in the Spratlys.

Sabbas said he invited Vietnam first because its claimed island is closest to that occupied by the Philippines.

He said the troops could also play basketball with their counterparts present in the Spratlys.

"First of all we want to avoid any untoward incident where we would be confronting each other. Of course it would be better if we face off in basketball and soccer," he said.

Planning before incident

Pag-asa is the only Sabbas-led municipal in the Kalayaan Group which is considered a municipality of Palawan. A small group of inhabitants in the area receive monthly supplies delivered by ship since the airstrip there is already dilapidated.

Sabbas said the football match with the Vietnamese was proposed before the Reed Bank incident on March 2 which the Philippines has protested but China has so far brushed aside. The Reed Bank is about 250 kilometers west of Palawan.

"The tensions a game, but we must have our guidance that everything will be done diplomatically," he said.

Sabbas said at least two Chinese patrol ships tried to prevent personnel of the Department of Energy from their oil exploration activities in the Reed Bank but left after two Philippine aircraft arrived in the area. No skirmish occurred.

"We just did our mandate because that is really our territory," he said.

Coast Guard escorts

The PCG commandant, Adm. Wilfredo Tamayo, said in a text message yesterday, the search-and-rescue (SAR) vessel Kalayaan Islands, dispatched three days ago, will join BRP Ventura at Reed Bank.

Another SAR vessel, the San Juan, was also set to depart Puerto Princesa yesterday afternoon to join the Ventura if Wescom is requesting for them.

They also said that they initiated these actions on their own.

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"We are bombarding the very gates of heaven with our most fervent prayers and supplication that God himself, the God of truth, justice and righteousness will be her own protector and defender, and that God will grant her a double portion of strength and courage so that in

THE DAILY GOSPEL

MARCH 8 (Tuesday)
Psalter-Week 1
9th Week in Ordinary Time or Ivrier of God
Pr 11:2, 7-12, 7-8, 9

The heart of the just one is firm, trusting in the Lord.

1st Reading: Sir 2:1-11

On the night of Pentecost, after I had hurried the body I removed boots, I washed myself and went out into the courtyard to sleep against the wall; my face was uncovered because of the heat. I did not see that there were sparrows on the wall of the courtyard and, as my eyes were open, the hot droppings from the sparrows fell into my eyes and burned; a white film came over my eyes. I went to Saint Sebastian's cathedral to see for medical treatment but the doctors assured that they would not save my eyes, the more blind I became because of the film. Finally I became totally blind. I suffered from blindness for four years. ...

My wife Anna worked hard as a women's maid, wearing. On the seventh day of the month of March she received her salary in order to buy foodstuffs. When she returned home she fell began to cry. I said to her, "Where does the little kid come from? Did you steal it? Return it to its owners for we are not allowed to eat anything that is stolen."

But she said, "It is a gift which has been given to us in addition to my wages." "I don't believe it. I will never consent to its owners." I was ashamed of her.

She replied, "What about your own almsgiving and your good deeds? Have we not up until all this from you."

Gospel: Mk 12:13-17

Jewish leaders sent to Jesus some Pharisees with members of Herod's party with the purpose of trapping him in his own words. They came and said to Jesus, "Master, we know that you are true; you are not influenced by anyone, and your words do not vary according to who is listening to you but you truly teach God's way. Tell us, is it against the Law to pay taxes to Caesar? Should we pay them or not?"

But Jesus, seeing through their duplicity, said, "Why are you testing me? Bring me a silver coin and let me see it." They brought him one and Jesus asked, "Whose head is this, and whose name?" They answered, "Caesar's." Then Jesus said, "Return to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." And they were greatly astonished.

Reflection:

We may search for something the whole of our life, which actually is not for us. It is positive from what is ours and what is not. But how do I know which is mine? This is when we need to quiet down that we may hear God's voice in our heart. Then, we can take what is ours and give to God what is God's.

Pagasa: Better forecasts with new machine

By Kristine L. Alave

THE WEATHER bureau has pledged to come out with more accurate rain and wind forecasts now that it has the equipment to do so.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) installed last week a Phi 2-million, Finnish-made wind profiler at the Pagasa Science Garden in Quezon City.

"The wind profiler will provide unmanned real-time operational support for weather forecasting, especially for aviation and in delivering quality meteorological data," Science and Technology Secretary Mario Montejo said.

"It is thus important for research on air quality, atmospheric boundary layers, mesoscale forecasting, global change, and vertical wind shear and turbulence," he added.

A wind profiler refers to acoustic or radio, or to remote, changes in wind speed, direction and temperature, among other things, using the Doppler acoustic Sounding System.

According to Pagasa officials, the equipment can take a picture of the wind as high up as 2,300 meters and cover a radial area of 300 kilometers. Information gathered by the equipment is automatically received and interpreted by software located at Pagasa's weather forecasting center.

Pagasa administrator Nathaniel Servando said the equipment would "improve the accuracy of forecasts," especially on wind and rain conditions.

The wind profiler, Servando explained, would help Pagasa track wind changes and cloud formations, which would indicate rain.

Servando pointed out the equipment would be very useful as the Philippines is governed by the monsoons at certain times of the year. It would also give the agency a better idea if a tornado is forming.

CCP goes digital with its collection

THE CULTURAL Center of the Philippines (CCP) has received a donation of equipment and software that will be used to convert its entire audio-visual collection on Philippine arts and culture into digital files.

The technology, worth P9 million, will be used in a digitization project that will involve storing, preserving, managing and providing access to the CCP library's vast collection of national, cultural and historical materials.

The collection dates back to 1979 and consists of approximately 40,000 hours of audio, 20,000 hours of film, 6,500 photos, 20,000 slides and 50,000 manuscripts.

The donor, EMC Corp., is a developer and provider of information technology and storage technology with clients in the banking, telecommunications and transportation industries, among others.

"Every film, music, ritual arts and report, data of humanity are all part of a country's national, cultural and historical heritage and, yet, many of these critical documents and cultural artifacts are at risk of disappearing without the right information infrastructure systems," said David Nelson, EMC president for Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand. "EMC recognizes and supports the protection of such important heritage of the Philippines for the enjoyment and appreciation of future generations of Filipinos," he said. Walter Ang, Contributor

18 Albayanos coming home from Libya

By Ray Manuel
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—The good news: At least 18 Albayanos who fled Libya are now on their way home.

The bad news: They are returning with hardly any money and no assurance of jobs in their hometowns.

The Interorient Inc. office Governor Antonio said on Monday is they are safe and will be reunited soon with their families.

The provincial government, which has been monitoring the condition of workers from Albay, together with Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (Poea), will not say a help desk for Albayanos and other Bicolanos trapped in Libya.

Monte's group was scheduled to arrive at Naia on Monday midnight and would be hosting immediately to their respective provinces, said Aparato based Cedric Daep.

Aside from Monte's group, Daep said Aparato had accommodated for 65 other Albayanos today Salvador Bellon, an engineer, who stood as emergency coordinator for Albayanos in Libya from various drilling, construction sites and oil rig companies.

Aparato has been coordinating with officials of the Department of Labor and Employment and the Department of Foreign Affairs in giving assistance to Albayanos in Libya.

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FORCED RETURN More than 300 Filipino workers from Libya crowd immigration counters at Ninoy Aquino International Airport on Sunday AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

13,000 Filipino workers urged to evacuate as fighting escalates

From page A1

If necessary, the government will arrange a third evacuation mission using the Philippine-chartered Greek ship MV Ionian Queen, he said.

So far, the Cyprus-flagged vessel, which has a carrying capacity of 1,720 passengers, has fetched some 1,886 Filipinos from the coastal cities of Benghazi and Tripoli.

Only 625 Filipinos boarded the first mission out of Benghazi, Labor said, convincing as such to repeat that the luxury liner turned 1,200 last week from the eastern city. On Friday, the vessel picked up in Tripoli 1,286 Filipinos, including nonessential staff and dependents of Philippine Embassy personnel.

At least 185 Filipinos from the vessel's first mission are still in Crete awaiting connecting flights to Manila.

As of Monday afternoon, 4,222 of the nearly 12,000 Filipinos in Libya had been safely returned to the country, Labor Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz said at the DFA press conference.

Baldoz said that of the remainder, 2,322 had received P50,000 in assistance. Applications for the one-time cash aid are being processed at the Philippine Trade Training Center, she said.

Following criticism last week that the government had been slow in returning to the Filipinos exile, Budget Secretary Florencio Abad said that while the Government Service Insurance System had released P13 billion from the $25-fee cash departing workers pay, operational glitches on the ground had prevented efficient response.

Crewe-led Carmelite Hinson insisted reports that government repatriation teams had complained about funding problems.

"We have not received any complaints from our people in the field," she said.

Yesterday, some 400 Filipinos—co-bound regular flights of Qatar Airways, Gulf Air, United Pacific, Etihad and Saudi Arabian Airlines—were expected to arrive at the Manila airport, according to Dawes.

"For the past two weeks, we have accomplished much," Seguia said in a statement. "There remains much to be done. We have had very close coordination and partnership with Secretary Baldoz and her team, and will continue to do so."

Seguia said he was "continually grateful to the discipline that up to now, there is no Filipino fatalities because of the crisis."

Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri, who last week slammed government efforts as "too little, too late," said the DFA should be applauded for scrambling in the past week to evacuate the workers.

But given that half of the estimated 26,000 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) remained in Libya, the government should step up its efforts not only to repatriate but to convince them to stay Filipinos who were the last three by ship from Libya.

"DFA has been assured the services of a ground handler so that in this phase you'll be properly serviced and refueled when it reaches Benghazi," the airline pointed out.

Many times in its 79-year history, the national flag carrier—with its wide international network—has embarked on emergency missions to evacuate OFWs in conflict-stricken countries.

Any emergency evacuation would be "quick and swift."

He said the government also should draw up a "more efficient response" for OFWs in other distressed countries in the Middle East.

Prepare for next crisis

For starters, the government should print emergency manuals for OFWs which list down dos and don'ts during an emergency point, and addresses of safe homes, Zubiri said.

"In my view they should improve their response if this happens in Bahrain, Oman and other areas," he told reporters.

Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. said the government should draw lessons from the Libya experience in drawing up contingency plans in case the unrest spilled over to other Arab countries.

"There should be a group assigned to do this, and a ready list of evacuation points in other countries in the Middle East [as well]," he said, stressing that government units should be on the ground.

"We should use these lessons from Tunisia, Libya and Egypt in case a similar problem erupts in another country," Villar said, referring to the government's report from AP

PAL ready to repatriate OFWs from Libya

PHILIPPINE Airlines (PAL) yesterday said it was ready—and just waiting for government approval—to mount repatriation flights for thousands of Filipino workers (OFWs) from Libya.

In a statement, PAL said Chairman Lucio Tan Jr. (5:—or even) before the mass evacuation of OFWs from Libya began in earnest—the flag carrier was ready to mount repatriation flights using its wide-body aircraft.

"PAL, therefore, takes exception to statements made by Labor Secretary Jerry Salcedo that PAL is 'insensitive' to the plight of OFWs stranded in North Africa," the company said.

The flag carrier said it was simply waiting for the green light from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) before it could begin flights should be mounted. "PAL is still waiting for that go-signal," the airline said.

"We wish to assure Governor Salcedo that PAL—as the nation's flag carrier—takes its responsibility seriously. We value our role as the government's partner in times of crisis. PAL has spent considerable resources and manpower in preparing aircraft, pilots and crew and securing necessary overfly and landing permits from the target pickup points identified by the DOLE. It is grossly unfair to be labeled 'insensitive,'" the airline stressed.

The plan was for PAL to fly to Heraklion Airport in Crete to pick up Filipinos who were there, and then by ship from Libya.

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Gadhafi forces advance on rebel-held oil port of Ras Lanuf

From page A1

Gadhafi forces, a large truck and army vehicles, and a fighter jet, they were coming closer to the liberation," Ahmed al-Arabi, a driver, told Reuters.

"I saw Army trucks ahead. I was about 20 km away from Bin Jawad," said Khalifa Rasul, another driver. Another witness said there were several trucks heading to Ras Lanuf.

A Libyan warplane surrendered over the rebels in Ras Lanuf, sending them into a frenzy of firing in it, shouting "Allahu Akbar! (God is great)."

Looking on, one resident said: "I believe these youths are ready to die, but they won't make a difference. Look at the way they're firing at the plane. They have no experience."

Another resident told rebels to go home and stop losing the fighting close to the oil terminals. A Reuters witness saw no more than 200 or so rebels in Ras Lanuf, but it was not clear how many more were in the immediate surrounding area.

Stopped at Sirte

The taking of Ras Lanuf had represented a major victory for the rebels on Friday but their advance toward Gadhafi's hometown of Sirte on the road to Tripoli was stopped by the modern Bin Jawad where rebels retreated under withering fire.

The rebels had punched through government forces in the oil producing towns of Brega and Ras Lanuf, then Bin Jawad, all strategically important for their push eastwards, which they made the mistake of leaving Bin Jawad undefended.

Government forces had slipped into the town at night and lain in wait for the rebels, who on Sunday were ambushed and could not regain the territory despite hours of fighting.

Visibly agitated

It was still unclear whether rebels still held al-Nawfaliyah.

Reporters evacuated Ras Lanuf's chaotic hotel before dawn on Monday after the staff warned they could not guarantee their safety. The journalists' same action only a small number of visibly agitated rebels or two checkpoints en route out of the oil port to the east.

Some reporters remained, but the hotel staff had not. A rebel soldier with a rifle on his chest ate served coffee to guests.

"We heard our positions would be bombed, so we took our weapons away," one rebel told Reuters on the dusty, windswept highway. Another said: "We took them our into the desert."

A third rebel said the more gusty were redeploying into the desert to prepare for an attempt to secure back Bin Jawad.

The night before, rebel commanders had been seen seated in the Ras Lanuf hotel lobby with a big sheet of paper on which red arrows were pointing in various directions, planning a military operation of some kind.

Out of harm's way

But rebels at the checkpoints were nervous rather than confident as before, saying families were fleeing Ras Lanuf and Bin Jawad to get out of harm's way.

"We are leaving simply because it will be safer," said the head of one family in a car stuffed with household belongings.

Some rebels accused Gadhafi's forces of using the local population of this ancient Berber-dominated area against them.

The rebels' retreat from Bin Jawad was sudden.

Hundreds of the loosely organized rebels were back at high speed in pickup trucks and others on foot in Ras Lanuf to regroup, with many saying they feared an Army advance has some warning to return immediately to the front line.

Many of the rebels are young, and they've just not used to war. That's why they ran back," Ibrahim Daw, a rebel, told Reuters.

Lack of experience

The revolutionary forces that had carried the Libyan rebels to three straight victories over government forces in Brega, Ras Lanuf and Bin Jawad were in sheer supply on Monday, after the surprise withdrawal highlighted their patchy lack of experience.

A Reuters correspondent talked to the rebels to gauge their mood on Monday.

The rebels said they had been relying on the residents of government-held towns to rise up and join them. But this is likely to become harder as the rebels move west into more affluent areas that have benefited from Gadhafi's rule.

Many fighters, mostly youths in jeans and sneakers, said they were betrayed by the people of Bin Jawad.

"We gave calls from the people of Bin Jawad's calling us to come through and that all was well. There are new ambushes," Hani, Daw said. "I can't believe our own countrymen would do that."

So far, the rebels had been unable to dislodge the fearsome mercenaries of fighting for Gadhafi. The rebels had been keen to highlight national unity and support for their cause.

The oil port of Ras Lanuf has remained pristine and landmine-free buildings, but the town is now littered with rubbish and covered in graffiti from the rebels.

UN appeal

Some rebels have looted months oil firms and were driver around in stolen trucks. Oil workers looked on fatefully, saying nothing to reporters.

Amid the bloodiest fighting of the three-week-old conflict, the United Nations demanded urgent access to areas of "repeated shelling" in the western city of Misrata.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said Gadhafi's foreign minister had agreed to let a "humanitarian assessment" team visit Tripoli.

Ban named former Jordanian foreign Minister Abdullah al-Khatib as special envoy to deal with the regime. Khatib was to undertake "urgent consultations" with the Tripoli government.

The situation in Misrata, Libya's third city eastern held by rebels, prompted a dramatic appeal from the UN's emergency relief coordinator Valerie Amos, after Gadhafi' tanks shelled the city centres on Sunday.

"Humanitarian organizations need urgent access to Misrata. People are injured and dying and need help immediately," Amos said in a statement late Sunday.

"I call on the authorities to provide access without delay to allow aid workers to help residents," he added.

Residents of Misrata, strategically located between the capital Tripoli and rebel—both key Gadhafi strongholds—had warned of "carnage" if the international community did not intervene.

Intervention by West

With the military situation worsening and populations caught in the turmoil, key figures in US politics stepped strongly for a US intervention to stem the rebels and restore a no-fly zone over Libya to thwart Gadhafi's Air Force.

Former US Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson said it was time to "severely sanction the rebels" and enforce a no-fly zone over Libya.

US Sen. John Kerry, the chair of the Senate foreign relations committee and a leading member of US President Barack Obama's Democratic Party said he assumed "a lot of weapons are going to find their way down from one means or another over the course of the next weeks."

Stephen Hadley, a national security adviser to Obama's predecessor George W. Bush, said Washington should look at the potential for funneling arms to Gadhafi's opponents.

"Obviously, if there is a way to get weapons into the hands of the rebels, if we can get into the hands of the rebels, I'm sure we'd embrace a no-fly zone over their own territory, that would be helpful," Hadley told CNN.

Gadhafi has not hesitated to use his air power against rebel positions, and reports that his forces bombed protesters in Benghazi in the early days of the revolt are among the atrocities being investigated by war crimes prosecutors from the International Criminal Court.

Former Czech President and international war crimes judge Vaclav Havel added his voice on Monday, saying military action on Libya by Western countries would be necessary if the armed conflict verging on civil war there disappeared.

"Especially if it drags on and if Gadhafi keeps bombing himself up and committing further crimes, some action will be necessary," Havel told the business daily Hospodarske Noviny in an interview.

US military options

The New York Times reported late Sunday that US defense planners were preparing a range of land, sea and air military options in Libya in case Washington and its allies decided to intervene.

Citing unnamed administration officials, the newspaper said just simple use of signal-jamming aircraft to neutralize al-Gadhafi could enable Libyan rebels to organize more effectively with military units.

According to the report, another factor would be to stop drop weapons and supplies to Libyan rebels. Reports from Reuters and AFP

Battlefield for green ...

From page A1

accord hand-clothes shop along one of the main roads of Palawan's capital city, Puerto Princesa.

He received a lot of death threats," Ortega's wife, Betty Ali, told Agence France-Presse in an interview at a mall just a few hundred meters from where he was killed.

The murdered Ortega, 47, a veterinarian, made many enemies via a radio show he was hosting show he hosted to rehash he lambasted politicians whom he accused of being corrupt and allowing the island's natural resources to be pillaged.

"He was a very passionate man, passionate about the environment," his widow said.

Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn backed the hypothesis that Ortega's murder could be a result of the broadcaster's crusade on the rapidly assisted by the Philippine government on the Malampaya natural gas project.

In a separate story, because correspondent Raissa de Anda had written that Ortega told "alarming evidence" that would expose corruption in the provincial government, and that at the time of his murder, Ortega was working on a report about alleged misuse of quarry money in connection with gas fields around Palawan's waters.

Natural wonders

On the far western edge of the Philippine archipelago, Palawan has some of the country's most beautiful beaches, interesting coral reefs and biodiverse forests—it is home to nine Unesco World Heritage Sites.

The environment campaigners say Palawan's natural wonders could be destroyed within a generation amid the frenzy to exploit them, citing as an example the destruction of coastal mangroves from cyanide and dynamite fishing.

Palawan's rich supply more than half the nation's seafood, plus millions of dollars' worth of fish to other Asian markets.

The province also has vast amounts of gold, nickel and other valuable minerals, prompting hundreds of applications to mine about half of the island.

The applications have spurred a high profile campaign to ban all forms of mining to protect Palawan's ecosystems.

Eleven percent of the Philippines' remaining virgin forests and 39 percent of its mangroves are on Palawan, according to government data.

Losing the fight

"From the pantanos de Cox great tourist area," Robert Chan, a consulting environmental lawyer and executive director of Palawan NGO Network Inc., said from his warehouse headquarters in Puerto Princesa.

"But if you talk about the resources that really mean something for biodiversity or medicine eventually for our future generations, if you talk about in old growth forests, if you talk about mangrove forests, if you talk about in coral reefs, we're losing it."

While there are many laws to protect Palawan's natural resources, there are no mandates for the lawlessness and corruption that pervades all of Philippine society, according to environment campaigners and some politicians.

"The biggest obstacle really is the temptation of money from big industries and those involved in illegal activities," Hagedorn told Agence France-Presse.

Bribe offers

Hagedorn, regarded by Palawan's environment activists as one of their most important political allies, has banned mining and logging in Puerto Princesa, which, although a city, has huge tracts of forests and white sand beaches.

"Outside the city demarcation it happening very fast," he said.

Hagedorn said powerful illegal area had often tried to bribe him to permit environmentally destructive practices, such as allowing sandboats of sediment (that were illegally fished) to be flown from his city's airport.

"You'll be surprised. Law enforcers, judges, come into my office [offering money and asking for favors] give them a choice," he said.

Environment campaigners say that, until this clause, they have to perform functions that government agencies and law enforcers should be doing, which often pushes them into very dangerous situations.

Successors amid danger

Chan, 43, said four environment activists from local communities he had worked with over the past decade had been murdered.

Chan and his colleagues train communities to resist destructive environment practices by filing lawsuits, but also to confiscate equipment such as chain saws used for illegal logging and even boats used for illegal fishing.

Under Philippine law, citizens are allowed to seize equipment used in illegal activities and arrest those involved.

Over the past 10 years, Chan said, his organization and the communities they worked with had seized more than 500 chain saws, two large ships, about 20 small outrigger boats and rifles.

But the successes are tempered by a sense of danger.

Delivering the message

Chan, who is married and has a young daughter, recounted having an incident in 2008 who had been working to oppose illegal logging and the entering down of mangroves in his community.

"We found him in a shallow grave in a beach. He had been specifically buried there for us to find him," Chan said.

"His testicles were taken off, put into his mouth, his tongue was cut out, his penis was gouged out, his fingernails were taken out...he had received 16 stab wounds."

Andelwin Sangkula, another Puerto Princesa-based campaigner, said he had also received many death threats over the past few years.

"We worried about my safety and the safety of my family but I will continue with my fight," said Sangkula, 35, who has three children, and was a regular guest on the murdered Ortega's radio show.

"I don't know whether it's just in my blood, but I see injustice and unfairness with what's happening in this province."

Full-page ad

Abraham Mitra, the Palawan governor who also chairs the province's sustainable development council, did not respond to requests by Agence France-Presse for comment on the allegations made by the environment campaigners.

The development council has run full-page advertisements in national papers recently rejecting claims that the local environment is being destroyed, and insisting that mining applications are being approved in responsible manner.

In the case of Ortega, the accused gunmen and four other people allegedly involved in the killing have been arrested.

Ortega's widow has filed documents in the justice department accusing a powerful local politician of masterminding the murder.

The politician, who has not been arrested, has gone on national television to deny any link to Ortega's killing. Police investigations are ongoing. Reports from AFP and Inquirer Research

LAWYER Robert Chan, executive director of Palawan NGO Network Inc., shows confiscated firearms and chain saws in his group's Puerto Princesa office. AFP

PATRICIA Ortega, wife of slain environment activist Gerry Ortega, shows a picture of her husband at a pet shop in Puerto Princesa. AFP

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INQUIRER

OPINION

Citizens vs corruption

EDITORIAL

LAST WEEK the Department of Finance forged an agreement with business groups and civil society to encourage citizens' participation in denouncing corrupt government officials, smugglers and tax cheats. So far, the anti-corruption group is composed of six big business and civic organizations but we believe more will join it as the campaign goes on.

The formation of a citizens' group to help in the campaign against corruption is an encouraging development. It can certainly help the Aquino administration, which is focused on an anti-corruption drive, remain its goal.

Cleansing the government of corruption will be like cleaning the Augean stables. The Philippines is considered one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Transparency International's latest Corruption Perception Index (October 2010) ranked the Philippines 134th among 178 countries surveyed.

In 2009 Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer asked 1,000 Filipinos in grade civil servants and the average score was 4 out of 5, with 5 being extremely corrupt. Seventy-seven percent said government actions to counter corruption were ineffectual, according to Samantha Grist, program coordinator for TI-Southeast Asia.

A huge amount of public money which could otherwise be used to fund public services and infrastructure goes to corruption. Bernard Meyer, United Nations Development Program country director, said the Philippines loses about P1.92 billion to corruption every year. Over a 20-year period, that's close to half a trillion.

In 2000, the cost of corruption was 10 percent of the Gross National Product. A more recent estimate put it at close to 20 percent of the national budget. This is money that taxpayers have scrimped to generously amend and that is supposed to go back to them in the form of services and public works, but which is going into the pockets of corrupt government officials and employees.

"In a comparison, 16 percent goes to education and 4 percent goes to health. With this 20-percent figure in mind, let's think how many schools, hospitals, barangay clinics could have been built, how many kilometers of roads could have been built," Meyer said.

About a week ago, the Department of Education signed an integrity pact with business partners, suppliers and nongovernment organizations to do away with "old habits" and encourage strict adherence to good governance. We hope that other departments and offices of the government would conclude similar agreements with their business partners to ensure the strictest transparency in all their dealings.

Education Secretary Armin Luistro, who signed the agreement for the DepEd, said: "[We] must acknowledge that corruption erodes the moral fiber and impedes economic growth [and] we must act responsibly by leading by example." It would be well if the well-known "owners of corruption" in government, such as the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Bureau of Customs and Department of Public Works and Highways, would follow the example and conclude similar integrity pacts.

But the campaign against corruption should be conducted not just by the government alone. More importantly, it should be conducted without letup by civil society groups and the average citizen.

The citizens' campaign could start small, as suggested by the Public Transparency Reporting Project. It could be as simple as pressuring and mapping the practice of politicians putting their names and faces on publicly funded projects and services.

Government officials and politicians who do this are essentially misappropriating public funds for their private gain (getting publicity for their reelection campaign at the next elections).

Another easily doable project would be to monitor the lifestyle of public officials and civil servants. Public Transparency Reporting Project (Pera Natin Iyo) is writing the relevant agencies and institutions to access the statements of assets and liabilities with net worth of government officials.

The people should also prevail on President Aquino to certify as urgent the Whistleblowers' Act and the Freedom of Information bill and ensure that Congress will enact these measures in the current regular session. These two measures would greatly help in the campaign against corruption.

The rest of the anti-corruption President Aquino is an suspicious thing to campaign all out against corruption. The task may seem daunting, but it can be done.

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Smudged foreheads

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"GET REAL" is the job that Ash Wednesday delivers. Ikaw tatanu-in mo ito one of the day's oxymoronic mottos. "Death pinches my entry and says: time—I am coming," Jaroslav Olivera Hasek's Bohemia never on late Shih tentsday.

Ashes will be traced instinctively in the form of a cross, via the forehead of President Aquino, on those who'll stone for penitence, despite poverty thermometers hotter than the sweatbrush.

"Your friend died last night," a panhandler lapsed to the with as we walked by. Predictably, the radio would head him some time, come to grisly Tsalmo per corrupti os meus. Darwin hunger motivated him into a scrawny man with a gap-toothed smile. "We never learned his name," she will recommend.

Tomorrow's ashes come from burnt palm Sunday 2010 fronds. Both end of the Lenten rites, ashes are mixed into a paste. A priest or lay minister wears the same on foreheads. He then touches or traces the cornerstone to ashes a disturbing reminder first heard from John the Baptist's disciples: "Remember man, that you are dust. And unto dust you shall return."

Pitchforkin's rise started as of two friends: a young Seminarian and an equally young political activist. They never met. But their paths crossed briefly at the founding gate for "Movie Republic," Mike Medavoy's studio in Manila.

This was midnight of March 17, 64 years back. Jesus Sarno, younger brother of journalist Napoleon Rama, went to Cotton Lobby airport to see the President off. Standing in that same crowd was Leon Pitchforkin, then aide de camp to Gen. Gerardo Bonifacio. Both were to fly with the President to Manila.

As Magsaysay awoke toward the ramp, he spotted Sarno. "Jess," he said clasping his arm, pointed Rama. "Come with me to Manila." Instead, Sarno had a phobia for flying, pulled back. Fernando recovered Rama, advising him, "Just accommodate the President, Jess." Between la Rama climbed aboard.

"In Ukraine Pitchforkin's then presidential aide-de-camp is, Leopoldo Buga supervised loading." Area recalls from his Chicago restaurant home. "President Magsaysay was already aboard."

But as a Club Filipino info, the Presidential aides Brig. Tomas Cabili and Celso Rep. Pedro Lopez. Tom met. "The plane's engines idled on. Gil Cabili and Lopez hurried aboard.

"Sorry sir, we must leave you behind," Buga apologetically said to the general. "Bonifacio snatched and mine were seated off the plane. The door slammed shut. And the heavily-laden C-47 took off—still to climb into Mt. Blanning-pd.20 minutes later."

Toiling half-way up Mt. Matutinggal the next day, Area search party two villagers belting a hammock. In it was the still warm body. Medal winner of the Philippine Republic Army would never see the face to reach the still-smouldering wreckage and human ashes.

"Pero sino ka at pumasa yourself the next morning," Thomas is foreign examined. "And in the Seminary, Leon Pitchforkin was then still slightful... Many die when they leave think of's ...Asian crimes worry. And tomorrow, he is gone. And when he is taken out of sight, he is also quickly out of mind."

Ash Wednesday's moment is imparted with our diary reminders: gimmicks who crammed off Armed Services finish, phobic justices and intolerances, passing sentiments, even former presidents, who stand off what while remained behind-the-scenes of midnight appointees.

The sun rose on Leon Pitchforkin, then of one point crucial season of Love. Sensing he crowned is shoved by major habits. Meadow observe. Instead, Nicolas and Buddhists are aside door for hearing. Jesse has on. Sens Epppin. Like Celestino, Angelicans designate Leon as a presidential session.

By the 8th century, "Star of Ashes" then had become common in the church, that the use of ashes spread very back. "I tweeted it There by hearing of the use. But now, many use words 'Pray,' says an unpublished Ash to the Wars from the whirlwind. "Wherefore, I..." repeats in dust and ashes."

Imelda likewise receives, in all unnerving ash-ing on Wednesday. On 7 November 2010, after the 7th Federal court's decision that found the Marcos regime "liable for torture, summary executions and disappearances" and awarded 7,338 victims nearly $1,000 checks that do the genesis here.

The claim can't "convert into a business," [sic], she insisted.

"You spit on the blood of thousands who died for freedom," snapped Bayanihi's Bis. Carol Pagaduan, a martial law victim. "You have no claims." "The Imelda Marcos who says this purgatory of the Tagalog residents, hiyang.

Those smeared forehead's mean more things, writes Fr. Danny Huang, SJ in an online paper, "Writing in the Dust." Mt. matthat. Pro penance. Pit hope.

We have to mark times from disappointing murders and abortions to massive theft. "The ashes acknowledge that, in the end, it's not the hands of the MILF, Abu Sayyaf or al-Qaeda. It is our hands. Cruelty and utter self-preoccupation are the ashes we put on our foreheads. We then face the mark of ourselves and refuse to "pass" into our Filipino superstar in palaces."

"With fasting, almsgiving and prayer, we pledge as more beyond ourselves with self-absorption and its consequences. We must not remain paralyzed by self-pitying power because we're not willing alive. If we are hoping-toughies," it says. [Internal] are never on, one small, fallen, big, but real step at a time."

Friend, we hope. "We know that the world is not changed by the brave feats of saints, but by the power of those whose spirits are made new."

That's what those smudged forehead's mean. (Email: juanlmercado@gmail.com)

Missing link

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiroz

killed and many are in sanitized—not by the shadow of all, not by the breath of death. Many death showed they are. Where their own hand fails, justice can always hold a hand.

Many with Mendanao Governor's organizing dispensations, P-Noy's "Pag anding anyags, sulong multirap" seems to be getting a lot of traction. From two things, the Senate hearing on Garcia and Garcia's appointments, are found corruption's trade orders and jurisdiction matters, nothing there more than the sum of their parts. The signs are hopefulsin that respect.

So, yes, we are making inroads in the fight against corruption.

The rise in the local passes has to been real. You can see that you in one vital similar by between the tollbooths and the Cuneta case. That is the lack of public outrage surrounding it.

There is public interest surrounding it, but not widespread outrage, just disappointment, no complaints and some reporters, also. There were packets of it during the MRT hearing, particularly after Lucena narrowed his abduction, and there are packets of it now, particularly after Reyes took his cars life. But it does not seem widespread.

There's the missing link in our investigations of corruption, in our hearings about pilfrage. In other countries, public opinion is very much a part of these investigations and hearings...public revulsion at the results, and or outrage is very much an element guaranteeing that they will be found out and punished. Not so here.

One is tempted to say that the outrage is in voters the public or by many regions of their rights, so he more resentful about their liberties, to be more jealous about their property. In part that is true. A great deal of indifference and cynicism has seeped into the culture, so much thanks to the last nine years, which reveals painting hard. But it's really more than that. Because the problem really is not that we are unaware of the robbery that is taking place before our eyes, it is that we cannot see the robbery that is taking place before our eyes.

The problem is not that we are blind to the thieves, "this old dog names [sic]," suggests the depth of the problem. It's just a division of spirit. If corruption is robbery as all, it is robbery between public officials. They are robbing each other, they are savaging each other. They are not robbing us, they are not savaging us.

To be jealous of your property, you must know that it is your property. That's the crux of the problem. Elsewhere in the world, that is very close. There are the people's money, the national treasury is the people's money, the money that public officials use is the people's money. That is not in abstract here. We do not really see that as our money. We—the press especially—who investigate thirty to five to six times a week, we have not yet become aware of ME—do not see taxes as something we entrust to government to give back to us in the form of roads and bridges and schoolhouses. We see taxes as globally, or temporarily, are required to pay and officials in the same way that we'll give up part of their income to their banks, in the same way that outside gets written in their taxation. Once we give it to them, it is no longer our property to declare.

We do not see the taxpayers' money as being the people's money, but that hasn't seeped into the culture, that hasn't seeped into the national consciousness. That is what needs to be done. The fight against corruption cannot be waged solely by governments. That is impossible; all that it will lead to is a reasonably honest government succeeding in modernizing, but grand. So long as the people themselves are not incensed by corruption because they do not see it as robbery, no, so long will it thrive, metastasize and grow.

We're still a long way to go.

Challenges of island provinces

MY RECENT visit to Tawi-Tawi was so rich in valuable observations and insights that so do justice to them all was simply not possible with one column. After all, small as it is (whether in area or population), Tawi-Tawi is as much part of the Philippines as any of our 79 other provinces, and so Malaysian products could be seen all around. A reader lamented how many still say "from Aparri to Jolo" when alluding to the entire length of the country, when "from Batanes to Tawi-Tawi" would be more apt. In this way, our archipelagic island province is equally aggrieved. It is also an excellent laboratory for studying the peculiar challenges of our island provinces, reminding us to consider our country's archipelagic nature and not to be overly land-biased in envisioning our various development challenges.

At the vaunted inland hamangan of the capital town of Bongao, we met "Barrio" (the surname is its) amid the hamangan exposure) suffered a substantial hamangan blackout, what "should be the most necessary" effort in his hamangan fishing grounds. The establishment of Barrio Lailahali is unfrequenting the customary is admirable, as he told of mutual serving assistance and remittances from the metropolis. Like many Filipinos, he has a number of properties and his endeavors have remained firm through the years. While his parent agriculture foundations a big machine gun, he claims that it has namely limited value as deterrent as would the existence of the fishing vessels that are the backbone of the island arsenal can. On a nearby shore, half a dozen fishing boats they had confiscated for illegal fishing—including for use of dynamite—sat resting in the sun. It was very difficult for him, he stressed, to deprive apprehended fishers, including his own hamangan shares, of the sustenance of their livelihood. But it had to be done.

Their efforts have paid off well. Fishers from Barrio Lailahali on the other side of the island—in Sitangkai, the "Venice of the South" among his customers' favorite—are now the most numerous fish in his hamangan waters, he observed, a rise small women, motivated apparently by the success of their husbands, have begun to go out in their own boats to fish, using hook and line. Barrio Lailahali is safeguarding its marine resources, but he told of serious enforcement and construction from the mainland—including from the police—that he and his colleagues

Sin at his most dynamic self

LETTERS

I felt elated that a photo of the investment of Jaime Cardinal Sin has made it to the front page of the Inquirer's Feb. 28 issue.

I have many photos of Cardinal Sin as reference—from his youth to his priesthood, to his ordination as cardinal, to his installation as the People Power Revolution, to the time of his advanced age.

Making investment is intended to highlight the most vigorous and dynamic time of the subject's life. For some, like the remarkable Cardinal Sin, there are many such moments. I chose the photo that shows him being declared cardinal as the reference for my work, to highlight the fact that Cardinal Sin is one of the youngest to be declared cardinal by the Vatican.

Cardinal Sin, as I depicted him in the Spirit of People Power Movement in EDSA, represents cardinal Sin in 1986.

As a caregiver of contemporary art, I apply my rigorous tradition of expressionism. All comments are well taken, and I am grateful for the outcome.

—EDGARDO CASTRO,III,
www.edgardocastrollo.com

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Former govs can push good governance

AS THE last on the appointments of losing candidates in the last elections happen in rare months. I hope President Aquino will not forget to consider former Governors Abing Ilil Padilla and Grace Padaca for appointment in government posts that will allow them to further contribute to the advancement of people for good governance. Both former governors are proven effective, related and empowering leaders who have demonstrably they love to the governance to the people's very hearing and decisions based of logically perceived by their political fans.

Padilla was only named as the top-notch "Person of the Year" in 2007, his province also received the prestigious Gawad Galing Pook award for its effective query on reduction program under his leadership.

On the other hand, Padaca is well known for her fight to save the Sierra Madre from illegal loggers and for receiving the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Government service, which is acknowledged by many as the Asian equivalent of the Nobel Peace Prize. Among the other recipients of the award are local Government Secretary Jesse Robredo and the President's mentor, the late Armant Presidente Ramon Aquino.

Aside from their qualifications, both of these models can some of democratic and people power supported Benigno Aquino during the pre-elections as the chairperson of the Liberal Party in their respective provinces. I hope that Mr. Aquino will give them two elementary leaders a chance to work with him in fulfilling his campaign promise: "Kung walang corrupt, walang mahirap."

—ELIZETTE L. EDU,
director for family leadership and social entrepreneurship, ateneo school of Government,
harvardedu@gmail.com

Courting people's anger

IN RECENT PUBLISHING by the postponement of the electorate in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) reasons for counting the people's are if they insist on their proposal.

The "temporary" reign of terror in the ARMM is over. This they are "official" is saying that the temporary election ban has been in the region and still influence the outcome of the elections. In fact, the elections, unbelievable in degree, would give ARMM voters a glimpse opportunity to elect the people officials who they think are honest and competent and can truly promote and protect the people's interests.

The supporters of postponement are also saying that this would give time for the government to cleanse the voters' list and conduct a fraudulent audit of the recent the Commission on Elections can cleanse the voters' list soon, while the fraudulent can be done by a new leadership.

The plan is appalling the ARMM's officers in charge instead of cleaning the region to elect to regain officials it is conceived as a tragedy of the right of suffrage of the people of the region. The freedom of the people to choose their leaders is a sacred right in a democratic society. To take this away is to rob them of their only weapon against corrupted officials.

—BARTOLOMÉ LORENTE CBE, ed.d.
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Gen. Oban vows to slay Goliath of graft in AFP

From page A1

someone who will be around for only nine months and six days and who is taking command at a time when Congress is pushing into corruption scandals in the military.

Oban will reach the mandatory retirement age of 56 on Dec. 15.

Giving the biblical story about the boy David who killed the giant Goliath with a sling shot, Oban said: "While assuming the helm of our modernization, we shall work with what we've got."

"He (David) worked with what he had and he defeated the enemy," Oban said during the turnover ceremony at Camp Aguinaldo attended by President Aquino.

"Perhaps the reason why David succeeded was that he looked at Goliath's size as an adversary to defeat but as a target too large to miss. Winning the peace goes on a target that is too hard to miss."

PHOTO: Soldiers equipped with night vision gear and some of the anti-weaponry stand atop a jeep during Monday's turnover ceremony at Camp Aguinaldo.

War to the corrupt

Oban called on top military officers to follow "simple and healthy lifestyles."

He said he would hold himself and other officers accountable in the use of funds and vowed to prosecute those engaging in corrupt practices.

"I pledge to strengthen the procurement process and ensure accountability of every resource manager in the Armed Forces," Oban said.

He promised to modernize the computerization of the AFP procurement system to document all transactions, greater check and balances and more frequent unannounced audits.

Why Oban

The Commander in Chief seconded Imperial.

Speaking extemporaneously, the President said the reasons he picked Oban for the job, including the way Oban handled the insurgency problem when he was commander at Basa Air Base in Pampanga.

Mr. Aquino said the insurgents around Basa were then heavily influenced by rebels but when Oban left Basa, these insurgents were "no longer influenced because he helped in solving problems that he saw there."

Mr. Aquino thus drew was a need for a creative approach in handling the insurgency problem and that because of Oban's skills in "engineering catastrophe" during his stint as deputy chief of staff, "I am very hopeful that he will continue the policies" of the administration.

A battered AFP

"These reasons are why (there has) to become the new chief of staff," the President said.

Oban inherited an AFP pummeled by scandals, including the so-called palace practice neighboring former top AFP officials who allegedly received tens of millions of pesos in windfall gifts on their retirements and who supposedly diverted military funds for their own use.

Stomping out corruption would be at the center of his policies, Oban said.

"I pledge to safeguard funds from all sources, including those of Malhkazan and the United Nations and especially those coming from our taxes, the blood and sweat of our people," he said. He was alluding to allegations that funds for military exercises with the United States and for UN peacekeeping missions had been misused.

"I shall hold myself accountable for their proper and effective utilization," Oban said.

"And I pledge to strengthen the enforcement and prosecution of those who are not willing to work on this same pledge."

Everyone accountable

Oban said the AFP would lobby to amend the Procurement Reform Act to allow non-systems, like the use of purchase cards for military field personnel during contingencies.

"To every activity of the Armed Forces, we shall remove two basic conditions that breed corruption—opportunity and motivation," he said.

This he would do, Oban said, "by further strengthening our systems and procedures that shall ensure accountability of every personnel and by promoting a culture that will encourage every soldier not to tolerate corrupt practices. We shall overcome."

Oban also said he would continue the new internal peace and security plan dubbed Bayanihan.

Oban, a combat pilot and the 58th air force chief to head the 120,000-strong military, was previously the deputy chief of staff who supervised all offices in the AFP headquarters.

Among the former chiefs of staff at the turnover were retired Air Force Gen. Aniceto Aventajado, the chief of staff when Oban was the public information officer.

Oban vowed to "fully implement" the recommendations of the 2006 Feliciano Commission that looked into the July 27, 2003, Oakwood mutiny.

Responding to corruption allegations by rebel officers, the commission had recommended abolishing the chief comptroller's office and simplifying procurement procedures.

No revolving door

Mr. Aquino told reporters he would not repeat his predecessor's widely criticized "revolving door" policy of appointing chiefs of staff for only brief terms, and said he was after continuity in policy.

Former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo appointed 12 chiefs of staff in her nine years in office, with Defense Secretary serving the shortest stint of 60 days.

"It's always going to be the best person available at the time for the job at hand, regardless of position," Mr. Aquino said.

Oban said reporters he would set timelines and deadlines for joint staff offices to work on procurement and logistics reforms, modernization and housing for soldiers.

He said these reforms were "doable within the next four to five months."

"I consider reciprocate to do my job within the short period allotted to me. I'll have to produce results ... and lay down long-term plans," he said.

A "reformist by heart" man here former renegade officer Isidro Quesada described Oban, his match (classmate) in Philippine Military Academy's Matapat Class of 1979.

"His track record is unmistakable," Quesada told the reporters. "I believe him when he said that he will be true to the people. Our class has always been like that." With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Marlon Ramos

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Across the NATION

A BRIGHTER RAGUIO Capping Baguio City's top tourist event, the Panagbenga Flower Festival, the 102-year-old summer capital treated residents to a spectacular fireworks display over the weekend.

Cops hunt bloodbath suspect

By Carla P Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—A former barangay captain wanted for the bloodbath in Silay City that left four barangay officials, including a 16-year-old Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) chair, dead and three others wounded threatened to commit suicide if police would arrest him.

Geraldin Gallego, president of Silay's Association of Barangay Captains, said he had talked to Noel Ayalin, 48, through his cellular phone on Monday morning to appeal to him to surrender.

"He told me that if the police came to arrest him, he would commit suicide before they could get him," said Gallego, who was also BAC president when Ayalin was barangay captain.

Ayalin would not disclose his whereabouts, Gallego added.

"There (armed) ... to be (no) ... someone in his voice," he said.

On Sunday morning, Ayalin, 48, barged into a council session in Barangay Bagtas Hamoc and fired a .45-cal. pistol several times, killing SK Chair Jesse Oconita, 16, and Councilors Lorvinnie Cenizares, 45, Fred de Jesus, 58, and Rolito Oracio, 52.

Barangay Chair Ramon Cristino, 45, and Councilors Salvacion Corrigda, 43, and Lenny Lauron, 54, were wounded and brought to hospitals here.

Ayalin—might have been driven once by frenzy when barangay council members were asking him to liquidate P1.2 million in barangay funds.

Residents had earlier said he was reluctant when the old Lexus vehicle owned by the barangay was removed from him on Saturday.

Gallego said he tried to convince Ayalin to surrender, saying the lives of members of his family were in danger, and that his surrender was needed for them to be rescued.

A master police hostage negotiator for the suspect. "He is considered armed and dangerous," Senior Supt. Allan Ornatiza, Negros Occidental police director, said on Monday.

The police have secured the three survivors at two Bacolod hospitals, as well as the family of Ayalin who might be targeted for retaliation by relatives of the victims, Gerdino said.

Celebes maleficence surgery on Monday to have the bullet taken out while Corrigda had one badly damaged kidney removed.

Lauron had to be operated on on Sunday after a bullet grazed his liver. He might have to undergo another surgery.

Interior Secretary Jesse M. Robredo ordered the Philippine National Police (PNP) in Western Visayas to arrest all efforts to arrest Ayalin.

"The department highly condemns the brutal killing of the Captain Barangay officials and will ensure that the four suspect will be put behind bars. The police should immediately apprehend Ayalin and file appropriate criminal charges against him," Robredo said.

He directed the police to protect the families of the victims and implement measures to prevent retaliatory attacks that could result in more violence.

Robredo urged local officials to exercise extra caution in the performances of their functions, especially in the fight against corruption.

Senior Superintendent Osmeo, legal officer of the Department of the Interior and Local Government in the region, said the vacancy in barangay positions could be filled up in accordance with the rule of succession governing barangay officials.

The remaining councilors will assume the positions of the three who had died, depending on their rankings in the past elections. With a report from Hector P. Bargas Jr., Inquirer Visayas

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NEWSBRIEFS

MALAYBALAY CITY

3 cops killed in ambush

THREE policemen were killed in an ambush by communist rebels in Barangay Maasayan in Malaybalay City in Bukidnon on Sunday, according to Maj. Julio Eugenio Rosas, spokesperson of the Army's 4th Infantry Division.

Five others were wounded.

Rosas said eight members of the city police on board two vehicles were responding to the reported killing of a former barangay chief when they were attacked by about 20 men believed to be members of the Santoro de Casas-Dad Dyag of the New People's Army's Front Committee 6 led by a certain Ragasio and an alias Yong. Antonio L. Lim, Inquirer Mindanao

LUCENA CITY

Fishers rescue dolphin

ITS BITMEN rescued a dolphin stranded in Talao-Talao, a barangay in Lucena City facing the Tayabas Bay and released it back into the sea less than an hour later, according to a village leader.

The dolphin, measuring 2.3 meters in length and weighing more than 50 kilos, was lying ashore at around 6:00 p.m. on March 2, Barangay Councilor Basil Bonoan said.

It had a minor head wound and bruises in the body, which were left untreated when it was brought to deeper waters, he added.

Doña T. Alaban Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

MAASIN CITY

Reward for rapist-killer

THE CITY PEACE and Order Council (CPOC) is offering a P100,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the rapist-killer of a 70-year-old woman last month.

Supt. Marcial Elnago, city police director, said the same amount was again levied by the council last year for the resolution of a similar crime.

Lucia Bantoto, 70, was killed inside her house in Barangay Tawid between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. on Feb. 23, Elnago said. In April last year, a 60-year-old retired teacher was killed, also inside her house, in Barangay Dongpit.

Jun Aman, Inquirer Visayas

PANGASINAN

Couple hurt in gun attack

FORMER Vice Mayor Ramon Arcinue of Urdaneta, Pangasinan, and his wife, incumbent Barangay Poblacion Chair Zenayda Arcinue, survived an ambush by two armed men on their way home in Barangay Nancamaliran on Monday night in Binmaley town in Pangasinan.

Police said the couple were aboard their motor vehicle on their way to the capital of Lingayen when two men on a motorcycle shot them. The two armed men were overtaking the vehicle when they took the chance to shoot him in Nagsaag City, where they were declared out of danger.

On Saturday, police said a P500,000 reward was offered by the Arcinue family and the provincial government to people who could provide information that would lead to the arrest of the suspects, who remained at large in the attack. Yolanda Catalan, Inquirer Northern Luzon

BENGUET

5 killed in Kennon fall

FIVE PEOPLE died while another was hurt on Sunday when their vehicle fell into a 40-meter deep ravine on Kennon Road in Tuba town in Benguet, police said.

Reports from the Tuba police and the Office of Civil Defense in the Cordillera said the victims—Mohammad Pigan identified as a slippery section of Kennon Road in Barangay Camp Trinidad in Tuba—Tabang in Barangay Camp 3 at 6:00 a.m.

Reports identified two of the fatalities as Francisco Dronco, 55, the driver; Clarinda Valdevez, 61, Mario Margarette Cook, 52, and Ma. Regina Jaramillo, 63. A passenger, Marlon Camacho, 32, was hurt and was taken to Baguio City General Hospital and Medical Center.

The victims, all residents of Baguio, were reportedly on their way to Tarlac.

Jhiner Kristian Bautista, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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Montecillo Jungolf team tilt fires off at Malarayat

TAGUINA

LIPA CITY—Junior Gamers silver medalist Miguel Tabuena traces local one of two Philippine teams to victory in what may be his farewell event as an amateur in The Montecillo Junior Golf Team Championship that sees off today at the Mt. Malarayat Golf and Country Club here.

The 16-year-old Tabuena, who is eligible to turn pro this year after finishing 22nd in the team/four qualifying school last December, is set to announce his decision after the tournament, which attracted the best junior players from six countries in Asia and the Pacific.

"It's a big moment for Miguel, but we all know that his pro plans will take a backseat here and he'll try to contribute the best way he can for us to win," said Corey Hunting, chair of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines in yesterday's opening ceremony.

Though the Philippines is entering two teams each in the boys' and girls' play (Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Bangladesh, Singapore and Guam are out to muddle up the race for the top awards in a tournament that has drawn the official sanction of the Royal and Ancient of St. Andrews, Scotland).

Held in honor of the late Amalia "Mommy" Montecillo, prime mover of the jungolf movement in Asia, the tournament is the first local event to be accorded such honor since 1996, when the country hosted the Pistol Amateurs.

Tabuena is joined by reigning Philippine Amateur champ Clyde Mondilla, Johns Carlos and Ian Gandionco in PH Team 1, while Rupert Sarmiento, Kenneth Ezaru, JP De Claro and Jesse Asarin make up the other boys' team.

Taiwan's International Junior Golf Association champ Chieh-Hsuan Hsiao, Jeremy Lin and Ho-Chi Chen are the top guns for Chinese Taipei, while Thailand's Kanaphon Sapunpol, Kitsanon Kaewsuwan and Thanyakon Khrongpha are the top players for Thailand.

Bangladesh's Ahmed Nasif Nawaz, Sajjad Hossain and Mahmud Hasan Khan, Singapore's Jonathan Lim, Jeremy Lua and Ryan Ong, and Guam's Jeremiah Ezaru, Jr. Dr Chen

James Yap to the rescue

SPORTS

Editor: Teddyboy B. Molmisa
Assistant Editor: Francis T. J. Delos

Confident Azkals arrive in Japan

By Cedrik P. Tupas

MONGOLIA PULL for fencing a more cohesive and confident Philippine side in the second leg of their AFC Challenge Cup qualifying series on March 18 in Ulan Bator.

Striker Phil Younghusband guesstimated this yesterday even as he said that the pressure of playing at home may have played a part in the Philippines not scoring more goals in their 2-0 win over the Mongolians at the Panaad Stadium in Bacolod City last month.

"It's the same team, same players, but the difference now is that we're more confident," Younghusband told the Inquirer just before the team left for Japan, where they will undergo a one-week camp in wintry conditions dreary similar to Ulan Bator.

"We're fairly confident because we know what to expect from Mongolia," he added.

A snow shower greeted the Azkals on their arrival in Narita last night.

Prevailing temperature in Kawaguchi, at the foot of Mount Fuji, where the Azkals will train until March 12, ranges from minus 2 to 1 degree Celsius.

Coach Hans Michael Weiss said the conditions might swell for their buildup.

"I have information that it is snowing [in Gotemba] and that will be the conditions we are looking for," Weiss said.

He said acclimatizing to Japan will greatly help the preparations of the players, especially the homegrown players.

Skipper Aly Borromeo is relishing the chance to train in a world-class facility in Japan. "I heard they have world-class facilities and we look forward to playing games against very good teams."

Also making the trip to Japan were Chieffy Caligdong, Anton Snodgrass, Isaid Amore del Rosario, Ian Araneta, Simi Sessions, Isabel Hermoso, Emelrich Pabuwa, Mark Fenex, Peter Jaugan, Chris Cameron, Jerry Barbaso and Kim Rebosura.

Stefan Gruenwich and Jason Sobkie will join the team in Japan, while Ray Joseph and Jason de Jong are expected to link up with the squad in Ulan Bator.

Applicants must bring Valid ID, proof of billing and latest financial documents. Subscriptions are subject to a 24-month lock-in period. Smart Credit Guidelines and policies shall apply. Also available for Regular - Consumable at P3,000 cash-out for Plan 1500. Promo runs until April 30, 2011. Per BIR-MCB Permit no. 0380, Series of 2011. ATC Ref. Code: Img2Pro1810

Rudy Salud, sportsman nonpareil, passes away

By Ronnie Mathurin

FORMER PBA commissioner Rodrigo "Rudy" Salud, the lawyer and sportsman who crafted the constitution and by-laws of the pro league, passed away at 12:15 p.m. yesterday at the Intensive Care Unit of Medical City in Pasig.

SALUD, 73

The father of twin PBA commissioner Angelo "Dido" Salud, who was also the founding secretary general of the Third Olympic Council, would have turned 73 on Sunday.

Before joining the PBA, Salud also served as secretary general of the Games and Amusements Board, and the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines. He also held that position during the early years of the Philippine Racing Commission.

Salud is credited with instituting several the foremost of the PBA when questions of officiating integrity had turned off fans. He first set where he was smart, unduly dissent on commissioner in 1988 was to terminate half the number of the referees' pool.

Salud resigned in 1993 to campaign for Ambassador Edgardo "Sandiko" Espiritu's unsuccessful presidential bid.

According to longtime aide George Ilf, veteran, Salud was admitted to the hospital on Feb. 28 to replace the battery of his pacemaker, which was implanted in 2008 to regulate his heart rate.

Alcantara said the operation was a success but complications arose on Sunday morning.

Salud's family, led by his wife Josephine, Chito, Dr Arnold, Christine, Margaret, Annabel and their families were at his bedside when he died.

Another son, Renato "Ato", was scheduled to arrive from Singapore last night. Daughter Priscilla is arriving from the United States today.

Viewing will be on Tuesday and Wednesday at the Sto. Nino Della Strada Parish on Eastwood Road, corner Bound Street in Quezon City. Interment will be on Thursday.

WBC founding no-go's

Aside from making the constitution and by-laws of the PBA, which the late Antonino Montano Jr. branded Salud as somewhat the fruit of his ruling committee,

Salud served as Abap secretary general under the late Mayor Nemesio Yabut and the Philippine Racing Commission under Yabut and later Cojuangco.

Salud will be best remembered for his remarkable relationship with the sports media whom he considered partners and friends in bringing PBA entertainment to Filipinos.

It was PBA founding commissioner Leo Prieto who brought Salud to the PBA as legal counsel in 1975, when the pro league started. Prieto was then the president of the Manila Jockey Club, of which Salud was the legal counsel.

He became the third PBA commissioner, succeeding Col. Meinrado Pecho, who took over from Prieto in 1982. With a report from Gino Navarro

TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2011 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER A 15

Aplus METRO

Editor Abelardo S. Glaraday

DID YOU KNOW

THE late Fernando Amorsolo, known as the "Grand Old Man of Philippine Art," was the first National Artist of the Philippines. He was given the distinction of National Artist for Painting in 1972. His major works include Maiden In a Stream, Dalagang Bukid and The Mestiza, among others. —Zoilo Galsim, Inquirer Research

Students from public high school in Taguig City top math competition

By Jerry E. Esplanada

STUDENTS from a public high school ruled the just-concluded 2011 Math Trail and Problem Solving Competition of Iliang Calculators and the Mathematics Trainers Guild (Philippines) (MTG).

The four-member team from San Ricardo Cayetanos Memorial Science and Technology High School in Taguig City topped this year's edition of the annual contest, according to Dr. Simeon Ilusa, MTG president.

The winning team was composed of Joshua Cubales, Alain Balbuena, Gleizz Marie Lijauco and Carl Rey Rimulmo.

Aside from a cash prize of P12,000, they took home the championship trophy, medals, calculators, electric fans and gift packs.

Sta. Ana Philippine Science High School (PSHS) in Quezon City placed second while Philippine Cultural College (PCC), a private school in Manila, ranked third.

The PSHS team, composed of James Jerard Gordon, Michael Bendich, Miguel Sebastian Ramos and Anniel Ily , won P10,000 in cash, medals and gift packs, among other prizes.

The PSHS students earlier topped the

STUDENTS, A10

5 cops charged in death at Naia

By Mike Frialde

THE PASAY City police yesterday charged with negligence resulting in homicide five airport police officers in connection with the death of a US Navy officer in December last year.

Senior Supt. Napoleon Coston, city police chief, said the charges were based on the affidavit submitted by the victim's wife who is based in the United States and on its own investigation.

"Based on the evidence, our investigators found that the police officers were negligent of their duties in extending security to a person in custody, which in this case is Navy Lt. Commander Scimar Mejia," Coston told the Inquirer in a phone interview yesterday.

Charged at the Pasay City Prosecutor's office were SPO2 Ruben Figueroa, SPO1 Marco Aguilar, Police Officers 2 Jay Guiyon and Noel Libertad, and PO1 James Dariano. According to probers, the five were beside the victim when he banged head first into a stairwell at the airport police office, resulting in his death.

On Dec. 16 last year, Mejia was taken in custody by the airport police after he made a scene at Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 1. This was after bag checkers found a sachet of a white powdery substance in his possession which was believed to be cocaine although later tests indicated that it was not.

Coston explained that the autopsy results showed swelling in some parts of the victim's body but there was no indication whether it occurred before or after his death.

Foul play was also ruled out and what figured prominently in the investigation was the laxity of the policemen in ensuring the victim's safety while in custody, he added.

"When you don't surrender or no any person in custody you make sure that the suspect is placed in a controlled jail," Coston said. "Mejia should have been placed in (a cell) when the investigators were not talking to him."

Anti-overload law provision draws flak from truck drivers

By Jaymee T. Gamil

A PROVISION of Republic Act No. 8794, or the Anti-Overloading Law, set to be implemented in May has drawn criticism from truck drivers, even as one provincial official claims the country's truckload limit is already "the heaviest in the world."

Starting May 1, the Land Transportation Office (LTO), the Philippine National Police and Department of Public Works and Highways will implement the gross vehicle weight limit on top of the current 13,500 kilograms per axle limit on trucks plying the North Luzon Expressway and Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway.

The maximum allowable GVW will range from 36,000 to 45,000 kg, depending on the truck configuration and number of axles.

To advance drivers on safety and security reminders as well as the new Anti-Overloading Law provision, the Manila Small Haulage Corp. and the Tollways Management Corp. (TMC) met with around 60 members of the Integrated North Harbor Truckers Association at the Umpang Harbor Area terminal at the Interamia Golf Club yesterday.

Some drivers objected to the confiscation of their driver's licenses as part of the penalty for overloading, saying this would lead to lost revenues.

They added that they are rarely informed of the cargo weight at pickup and loading points.

But TMC corporate communications service manager Benigno C. Ilalim said weight regulation was part of the responsibilities of truck drivers and operators. "We understand their concerns, but there are industry policies, and it is bigger than us. We have no recourse but to follow the LTO who deputized us to implement the law," he said.

He suggested that drivers organize with the source of their load, like ports authorities, to increase the truck load limits have already been repeatedly made in the past six years, Ilalim added. "Our 13,500 kg per axle limit is already the heaviest in the world," he said.

"Appropriate actions will [be] initially be taken if it is proven that there was negligence on the part of the security personnel assigned there," the mayor added.

Lim earlier promised to provide financial assistance to the girl's family as he also assigned lawyers to help them in the filing of cases against the gunman.

The gunman's father is a Manila policeman although he denied that he owns the gun used in the shooting.

He told investigators that he had no idea where his son got the firearm.

Asked if the school could be held liable for the shooting, Ca-ton said the immediate liability might fall on the security guards for their failure to prevent a student from taking a gun inside the school grounds.

WAKE INTERRUPTED
Residents of Cuina Street in Pateros, Metro City try to restore some order into the wake of an old woman after a coffin that was thrown into the tent and hit the coffin, causing it to fall. Several persons were injured and two motorcycles were damaged in the accident.

Students...

From page A-19

elimination round of the competition.

PCC team members Francis Concepcion, Jervis Chua, Andrew Co and Louie Franz Yao received P6,000 in cash, medals and gift packs.

The public school—Valenzuela Science High School—placed fourth, followed by Elizabeth Seton School in Las Piñas, Grace Christian College in Quezon City, St. Jude Catholic School-Cry Marian Philippine Institute of Quezon City, Ateneo de Manila University High School, also in Quezon City, and Cantonese Academy of Calamba.

Of the more than 60 schools which joined the competition, mostly from Metro Manila and Southern Luzon, 28 schools qualified for the contest finals, held on Sunday at SM North Edsa in Quezon City.

The other finalists were Bulacan Science High School, Las Piñas City Science High School, Pasay City Science High School, Bagong Ilog National High School, Gen. Pio del Pilar National High School, Saint Paul College of Pasig, Saint Peter Parochi College, St. Mary's College of Quezon City, Kaisahan School, Colegio San Agustin-Bifian, St. Patrick College of Parañaque, St. Francis of Assisi College-Bacoor, St. Alphonsus Liguori Integrated School, Philippine Cultural College-Caloocan, Dome Christian College-Dasmariñas, and Cavite State University of Technology and Humanities.

During the 90-minute finals, the teams were asked to solve a total of seven problems.

Some of the participants in this year's competition are graduates of MTC, a government grant group which has been winning the country's representation in international math contests.

Lim: Probe shooting on school grounds

By Jaymee T. Gamil

MANILA Mayor Alfredo Lim yesterday ordered a thorough investigation of last week's shooting on the Universidad de Manila campus which left two students injured.

In an ambush noon on Saturday, a 17-year-old student walked inside a classroom and sprayed with his pistol-used who had been trying to break up with him.

He then shot her in the face with a .38 cal. revolver before he turned the gun on himself.

Manila Police District Station 5 commander Supt. Philipe Canon Jr. said that the girl, also aged 17, was reported to be in stable condition at the Manila Doctors Hospital after undergoing an operation on Saturday night.

The gunman, however, suffered brain damage after he shot himself in the temple with his condition listed as critical at the Philippine General Hospital, Canon added.

Lim said he wanted to know how the student managed to bring a gun inside the campus as he ordered the Manila Community Police Group (MCPG) headed by Nicolas Ampara to submit a report on the shooting.

"Appropriate actions will [be] initially be taken if it is proven that there was negligence on the part of the security personnel assigned there," the mayor added.

Lim earlier promised to provide financial assistance to the girl's family as he also assigned lawyers to help them in the filing of cases against the gunman.

The gunman's father is a Manila policeman although he denied that he owns the gun used in the shooting.

He told investigators that he had no idea where his son got the firearm.

Asked if the school could be held liable for the shooting, Canon said the immediate liability might fall on the security guards for their failure to prevent a student from taking a gun inside the school grounds.

METROBRIEFS

2 businesses shut

Two business establishments were shut down by the Manila police City government yesterday afternoon after they failed to comply with the ban on plastics enforced earlier this year. City Hall inspectors closed the Master Siomai Restaurant Pansol at Malvejar Business Park and Mercury Drug Talk Haven Center, city information office Dino Arcinas said. According to Arcinas, the two establishments had already received two warnings for violating the landmark ordinance. "We have no choice but to continue to close the entrances so we are closing these establishments," he said. He added that one of the establishments had a bigger problem because its owners were operating without a business permit. The two were the first establishments to be ordered shut by the city government in connection with the ordinance banning the use of plastics and polystyrene packaging materials, which was signed into law by Mayor Alfredo Lim Pedro last year.

Nikko Dizon

Still no replacement

MAYOR Stanley Gordillo after he was killed by an "ex-communist," the position of Davao City Mayor remains vacant, Davao Region Deputy Chief PNP for Administration Chief Supt. Reynaldo Cheparo said yesterday. In an interview with the Inquirer, Cheparo said Vice Mayor Rodrigo Duterte had yet to appoint a replacement for Gordillo, who was killed by a sniper on Feb. 9 in Davao City. "Nobody has replaced him yet. The slot is still open," Cheparo said. He said that he had not yet heard from Duterte regarding the appointment. Cheparo said he would approach him to express their interest.

Krizchee Valdez Magpayo

Int'l confab set

THE Philippines will play host to the 2011 International Confab from March 10 to 12 at the Hotel 1 of the SMX Convention Center in Pasay City. The international conference, the first to be held in Asia, will center on the theme "Drive Your Plant to Greater Profits." "This year's conference aims to bring Asian and international companies the latest knowledge and innovative ideas in plant operations. For more information, visit www.asiaautomotivedrive.com or call (632) 1636480 or (632) 1636481.

Why Congress has a defective air-con system

ON TARGET
Norman Bordadora

THE PMA has brought back the tradition of allowing the class "goat" to speak before his classmates during graduation rites.

A goat is one who graduates at the bottom rung of his class.

The class valedictorian and goat are given the same privilege of delivering a speech.

Making a goat speak before his classmates, other cadets and guests is meant to humor him in a brotherly way.

Many goats become better officers in the field than their brighter classmates.

Lt. Army Gen. George Willam was an example of a class goat at West Point who later became the chief of the Louisiana State.

Here at home, Cadet Rodolfo Biazon was the class goat of PMA Class 1965.

Air Lieutenant Samuel Rocon, chief of staff and senator and a once congressman of Mandaluyong City.

* * *

The House of Representatives postponed some of its sessions last week because of the heat inside the Batasang Pambansa building.

Legislators could not stand the heat inside the session hall.

The air-conditioning system was installed during the rehabilitation of the Batasan during the time of Speaker Prospero Nograles.

The air-conditioning system, which was made in China, was apparently defective.

From the start, the whole system was not working, overheating was the problem.

My spy at the Lower House says somebody made a killing in the corrupted contract.

One of the goats the group composed 270,000 deaf that was scrapped after a bus and cry was raised against it.

Nobody in the House of Representatives has raised a complaint against the defective air-conditioning system.

Perhaps everybody was happy with the deal.

ART FOR SALE
An elderly man peddles paintings on United Nations Avenue in Manila. The art work on display is priced at P1,500.

'Hot' car registered to 2 owners a puzzle to cops

By Julie M. Aurelio

QUEZON City police have discovered what could be an unusual car transaction in the registration papers of a recently recovered Asian utility vehicle that turned out to be owned by two different persons.

The mysterious case concerned Lifted (2001) unit recovered by police on Feb. 9 on Elio Dominguez corner Sen. Jose Street in Barangay Kaunlaran.

Supt. Ferdinand Villanueva, chief of the District Anti-Carnapping Unit, said three members of a carnap group were believed to be responsible in Malabon.

Upon checking, police found out that the vehicle had two owners, one based in Zamboanga and another residing in eastern Metro Manila. It was among eight "hot" cars recovered in Metro Manila since February.

Villanueva said it was impossible that a transfer of ownership took place. Land Transportation Office (LTO) records showed that the vehicle has two different file numbers.

Using LTO records, the police official said the AUV was first registered at the LTO Manila East office in 2002, and later registered under the name of a different owner in Zamboanga.

Chief Supt. Benjamin Mamaclay, Quezon City Police District director, said the other recovered vehicles included a Toyota Altis (DIG-416), a Toyota Innova VE with labo license plates, a Kia Rio (MG-6761), a Nissan Sentra (DEB-281), a Mitsubishi Fuzo (DEB-5111) and a Toyota Inn (PE-IAD-80).

Actor-TV host sues radio anchor-columnist, editors for libel

By Julie M. Aurelio

ACTOR and TV host Jolin Lapuz yesterday said show biz writer and ABS radio anchor Johnny Escalitre for libel after the latter wrote in a column that Lapuz became unruly in a bar last month.

Also included in the case filed by Lapuz, Jonathan Anthony Lapuz in trial MCi with the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office was the publisher and three his editor of Bandera, the tabloid where Escalitre's column appeared.

Lapuz, a contract artist of television network GMA, claimed that Escalitre's column which came out on Feb. 10 damaged his 30-year reputation in the entertainment industry.

"I know that there was no incidence of me becoming wild or unruly as was reported by the paper 'magsalo' that will tarnish my image and the good reputation of the network that I work for," he said in his affidavit.

"It is entirely a contrary defamatory concoction resulting to different lie. Magsalo' taken as its plain and ordinary meaning, means [getting] wild and losing control. By itself, the term is defamatory," Lapuz added.

The columnist, according to him, portrayed him as a "man-hunting gay who would do anything to satisfy his sexual pleasure."

Lapuz also denied Escalitre's allegation that a similar incident had taken place in another bar in Quezon City.

"Escalitre has been writing malicious, unjustified and unverified news reports about me. He has consistently tarnished my image and reputation in his radio program," he said.

Sought for comment, Escalitre maintained that it was his duty as a writer to write about newsworthy events.

"Sir (Lapuz) is public property and he should be liable for his actions especially if he commit[s] it in a public place," he said.

Escalitre added that he had two witnesses who would attest to the truthfulness of what he had written. "As far as the case is concerned, I will face him in court especially I will present my evidence in court," he said.

US apology for boys' deaths rejected by Karzai

KABUL, Afghanistan—The American ambassador to Afghanistan apologized in person to the leadership of the Afghan government on Sunday for the mistaken killing of nine Afghan children in Kunar province, considering the seething Afghan president rejected the apology, according to a statement from the president's spokesperson.

Eric Ouvid, Petraeus attended the Afghan National Security Council meeting held Sunday and explained that the shooting of the children was when 9 to 11 years old, was a mistake and apologized to the Afghan people.

In response, President Hamid Karzai said that the apology was insufficient. Civilian casualties are the relationship between Afghanistan and the United States, he said, according to the statement.

"The people of Afghanistan are tired of these incidents and

GATES VISITS KABUL Gen. David Petraeus, left, chats with US Defense Secretary Robert Gates who arrived in Kabul on March 7 on a two-day visit to assess Obama's "surge" plan. AP

concerns, and condemnations cannot relieve their pain," Karzai said, according to the statement. "I am asking you on behalf of the people of Afghanistan that there be no repetition of this incident."

Civilian casualties caused by NATO troops are sensitive to the relationship between the West and the Afghans, and reinforce the Taliban's propaganda that blame troops do not care about the Afghan people. In fact, the more civilians are killed by the insurgents than by NATO, according to the most recent UN report, which said that more than three quarters of civilian casualties are now caused by the insurgents. However, it does that are caused by NATO troops appear to reverberate more deeply because of underlying animosity about the presence of foreigners in the country.

In Kabul on Sunday, a protest took place over the death of the nine boys. A larger protest was held last week in Nanghar, the capital of the district where the killing took place.

The shootings occurred in a poor, mountainous area. A couple of the boys who died were the only males in their families and were responsible for the care of their brothers and sisters. The loss of the only male income that the women will have to rely on relatives, who usually are already overburdened with their own families.

A boy who was injured but survived described a helicopter gunship that hunted down the children as they gathered wood on the mountainside outside their village. The gunners apparently mistook the children for insurgents who only hours earlier had fired on an US base.

In contrast to some episodes in which those killed included both insurgents and civilians, this one involved only civilians, and Nato quickly took responsibility for it. Typically in these cases Nato pays compensation to families, although it does not disclose the amounts. Petraeus has ordered an investigation and a review of the procedures used by helicopter crews.

In an e-mailed statement, a Nato spokesperson said, "We take all civilian casualties very seriously in light of the recent event that tragically killed nine children, but in situations like this it is necessary to determine the exact facts to establish responsibility of future civilian casualties," had refers to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

"General Petraeus has ordered all commanders and attack helicopter crews to thoroughly review procedures in the tactical directive, and to reinforce the need to protect innocent Afghan lives as we pursue a reconciliation," the statement said.

The Afghan police: 18 children were killed when a roadside bomb exploded on their vehicle near the border between the Pakistani tribal areas and Paktika province in southeastern Afghanistan.

New York Times News Service

China tracks foreign journalists, unnerved by tumult in Mideast

BEIJING—Western journalists have lately been sidelined in China, if grudgingly, for the spread of revolution in the Mideast. The fear has prompted the authorities here to adopt a more familiar tack: Suddenly foreign reporters are being tracked and detained in the same manners—though hardly as rough—as political dissidents.

On Sunday, about a dozen European and Japanese journalists in Shanghai were herded into an underground booker like rooms and kept for two hours after they sought to monitor the government media center. The government's internet site for Chinese citizens to conduct a "strolling" protest against the government outside the Peace Doctrine, near People's Square in Shanghai.

In Beijing, several plainclothes officers planted themselves on Saturday night outside the home of an American correspondent who was severely beaten by security officers the previous week as he sought to enter a similar "stroll." Another injured protest there. In a phone interview, the correspondent said that seven officers in two separate cars had trailed him to a basketball game on Sunday, recording his trip on video the entire time.

A dozen other foreign journalists based in Beijing, as well as their researchers and photographers, were visited in their homes over the weekend and repeatedly warned not to cause trouble—or one officer put it, try to "topple the party."

The intimidation of foreign journalists is a marked shift for the Chinese authorities and a sign of the government's resolve to head off any anti-government months like those that have swept the Middle East and North Africa during the past two months.

Anonymous Chinese-language posts on the Internet have called for people to show their discontent with the central government "acting as a model" at 2 p.m. every Sunday outside well-known locations in Beijing, Shanghai and several dozen other cities. Efforts at mobilization of the nascent protest security appeared to have helped contain that appeal, for now, it seemed.

Indeed, the move has been limited to the government's crackdown on the foreign news media. The Chinese Centers in August 2008 initiated a relaxation of reporting rules for foreign journalists, rules that made up for its material bones.

The group stunned into this humiliation, then in 300-strong persuasion section stopped its drum and sounded down, holding the authorities in thrall for a few seconds of silence to remember what was lost in the flames. Then they jumped up and started back to a nearest bus, leading Beijing's thousands of tuneless post-slapping and cheering fans.

"They're ready and we're strong—no one is stopping here said, thinking of what we lost," one member, Shania Alice Rives, clad in a metallic silver and blue studded said. before Parada marched in.

The fire in early February ripped through warehouses where Parada and two other elite samba groups were preparing for Carnival, incinerating more than 6,000 leather and glitter costumes and many of the big, meticulously decorated floats.

Alves's group had 3,200 out fits destroyed or severely damaged. Many wondered whether Parada, which has not missed a parade in its 89-year history would be able to put on a show at all. The two nights of lavish parades that bigger families are watched by millions in Brazil and abroad.

Once the shock passed, however, it became clear the 2011 Carnival would be marked more than ever by the bonded quintessential ability to bring hope and happiness, even if fleeting, to those who have little. It also mirrored samba group members' fierce allegiances in a city where fans are as devoted to their groups as they are to their soccer teams.

"Our community looks beautiful tonight," Parada president Nilo Figueiredo said. "It is really a community of warriors."

Some longtime members admitted in being a bit anxious about making an entrance that could be marred by what was lost in the fire.

"Our objective is always perfection," said Alessandro Meireles, a 45-year-old who has been a member of Parada's percussion section for a decade. "Even if we experience, we're going to put on the show people expect of us."

He was referring to the top tier samba competition, in which groups vie fiercely to keep their place in the elite for the best. There's no such prize for first place, only a trophy and the bragging rights that last a year until the next Carnival. Portela has won the samba competition 21 times, more than any group, most recently when it shared the title in 2005.

But this year the contest's governing body decided there was no way Portela, Academicos do Grande Rio and Unidos da Tijuca could be considered equals to the others, so they will not be judged. That means they don't risk losing second to the second-tier samba competition, the fate of each year's last-place finisher. AP

A PORTELA samba school dancer performs during the Carnival parade through the Sambadrome in Rio de Janeiro on March 7. AP

Rio group bounces back from fire

RIO DE JANEIRO—A month after a fire destroyed many of the lavish costumes of the Portela samba group, its members rallied to put on a moving show Monday night at Rio's Carnival parade, where they were made up for its material bones.

The group stunned into this humiliation, then its 300-strong percussion section stopped its drum and sounded down, holding the authorities in thrall for a few seconds of silence to remember what was lost in the flames. Then they jumped up and started back to a nearest bus, leading Portela's thousands of tuneless post-slapping and cheering fans.

"They're ready and we're strong—no one is stopping here said, thinking of what we lost," one member, Shania Alice Rives, clad in a metallic silver and blue studded said. before Parada marched in.

The fire in early February ripped through warehouses where Portela and two other elite samba groups were preparing for Carnival, incinerating more than 6,000 leather

A PORTELA samba school dancer performs during the Carnival parade through the Sambadrome in Rio de Janeiro on March 7. AP

Bangladesh court hears Yunus case

DHAKA, Bangladesh—Bangladesh's high court was to hear more arguments Monday as it considers the legality of a government order dismissing Nobel laureate Mohammad Yunus as head of the microfinance bank he founded.

Bangladesh's central bank ordered Yunus out of Grameen Bank last week, saying he was working in violation of the country's retirement laws. Yunus, an outspoken government critic, has said the dismissal is illegal and has vowed not to leave the bank.

A ruling had been scheduled for Sunday but was delayed as lawyers for Yunus made more arguments. The government was to respond in those arguments Monday, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam said.

The government holds 25 percent shares of the bank and the remainder is owned by its borrowers. The central bank says Yunus is holding his post illegally as his reappointment in 1999 was not approved by the central bank when he reappointed under Bangladesh law.

Yunus' lawyers have argued that a 2003 law gives Grameen special status that means those rules don't apply.

"Yunus is appointed by the Grameen Bank board of directors and only the board can fire him," lawyer Rokanuddin Mahmud said.

Grameen Bank, founded in 1983, pioneered the concept of relieving poverty by making small loans to the poor. The work spurred a boom in such lending across the developing world and earned him and the bank the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize. AP

India's top court allows 'passive euthanasia'

NEW DELHI—India's Supreme Court ruled on Monday that life support can be legally removed for some terminally ill patients in a ruling that will allow "passive euthanasia" for the first time.

The judgement came during a hearing into the case of former nurse Aruna Shanbaug, who has been in a vegetative state in a Mumbai hospital since being raped and strangled with a chain while at work 37 years ago.

A plea by journalist and friend Pinki Virani to stop her being force fed was rejected by India's top court on the grounds that Shanbaug was unable to make the decision on Shanbaug's behalf.

But doctors and nurses would petition to withdraw life support, provided the request was supervised by the courts, a two-judge bench in the Supreme Court ruled in a highly complex judgement.

"Active euthanasia is illegal. Passive euthanasia is permissible, but it should be done under the supervision of the High Court," it said.

Virani filed the case in the Supreme Court in 1999 asking for Shanbaug to be allowed to die with dignity.

"Death in certain conditions can be allowed, only if life support is denied or water is removed," Shekhar Naft, Virani's lawyer, explained to reporters outside the court after the ruling.

"It is for doctors to decide whether passive euthanasia can be allowed." AFP

ARUNA Shanbaug, comatose for 37 years.

Facebook, Twitter ignore free speech pact

SAN FRANCISCO—When Google, Yahoo and Microsoft signed a code of conduct intended to protect online free speech and privacy in restrictive countries, the debate over censorship by China was raging, and internet companies operating there were under fire for putting profit ahead of principle.

It seemed the perfect rallying moment for a new cause, and the companies hoped that other technology firms would follow their lead.

But three years later, the effort has attracted only a handful of members, and two of the biggest internet companies, Facebook and Twitter, are notably absent despite their large audience and wide use by activists in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Bennett Freeman, senior vice president of the nonprofit Social Accountability International, which helped create the code, said the initiative was not dead, but he acknowledged that it had not lived up to its potential.

"We have a way of life—it is democratic, open and based on dialogue and human rights," Bishop Ortega told the congregation.

Friedrich reiterated his views about islam over the weekend, but he also outlined he a dialogue between Christians and Muslims. Successful integration "requires two things: knowledge of the social reality in Germany and a clear awareness of the Western Christian origin of our culture," he said in a statement.

Lamya Kaddor, chair of the Liberal Islamic Union in Germany, said that Friedrich's remarks were a "slap in the face of Muslims."

"Such statements are not only politically and historically wrong, I think they are dangerous," Kaddor said. She added that Friedrich's position would undermine progress between Muslims and Christians that previous interior ministers had encouraged.

Germany has been grappling with how best to integrate its 4 million Muslims into the society it helps. The government is pushing for the children of non-German-speaking parents to develop better German language skills. *New York Times News Service*

Muslims' role in Germany questioned

BERLIN—Germany's new interior minister, appointed just last week, has already managed to upset politicians, church leaders and representatives of the Muslim community by saying that Islam is not a part of the country's culture.

"Islam in Germany is not something substantiated by history at any point," the interior minister, Hans-Peter Friedrich, said in his first news conference in his new job, adding that Islam did not play a major role in German culture.

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ibanez

Gulf nations offer money, jobs to assuage protesters

MANAMA, Bahrain—The leaders of Bahrain's opposition movement said Sunday that they would not be mollified by offers of money and jobs, raising the prospect of a protracted standoff between protesters and the embattled government of this strategically important Persian Gulf island nation.

"This is about dignity and freedom—it's not about filling our stomachs," said Ebrahim Sharif, a former banker who helped lead a protest Sunday at the gates of a government building.

Protesters in Bahrain have held daily demonstrations for the past three weeks, undeterred by a government crackdown that killed seven people. That continued on Sunday with thousands of people gathering in Manama's Pearl Square, the center of the protest movement for the past month.

Bahrain's Interior Ministry announced over the weekend that it was seeking to hire 20,000 people, a measure it said was designed to benefit job seekers and improve security in the country. Bahrain is home to a large US naval base.

The oil-rich economies of the Gulf, led by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, are also reportedly considering a plan to provide billions of dollars to Bahrain and Oman as part of an effort to address social problems and quell protests.

The recent spike in oil prices has given Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer, and its neighbors more scope for handouts and subsidies, part of a longstanding tradition of trading cash for domestic peace.

As protests have spread across the Arab world, Gulf countries have opened their wallets more than usual.

King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia last month announced $37 billion in months of pay raises, unemployment checks and other benefits. The king of Bahrain, Sheik Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, offered 1,000 dinars ($2,600) for each family. In January, the government of Kuwait said each citizen would receive the equivalent of $3,500. And last week the Sultan of Oman decreed that anyone without a job would be eligible for a monthly stipend of $355.

But in Bahrain and Oman economic concessions have yet to assuage protesters.

More than 150,000 people—almost one in five Bahrain citizens—joined a protest in Manama on Friday where many chanted, "Bread, Dignity and Freedom!" The king's family, which practices Sunni Islam, has ruled the Shiite majority since the end of the 18th century.

Smaller protests have also continued in Sohar, a northern industrial city in Oman, which is ruled by Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

"Poor people took the country but are still starving and getting no political reform," said Sheikh Jalil Khalil Ebrahim, a senior member of Wefaq, the largest opposition party in Bahrain.

Ebrahim says he believes future payments in Bahrain by regional governments will be in addition to, rather than instead of, not much for people who need them. In addition, the cash does not address the central demands of protesters—for democracy.

"They are throwing cheques to absorb the anger of people," Ebrahim said of the region's monarchs, which is rightly concentrated in Bahrain's royal family. "But the core of this is political, not financial."

In response to a mailed question, Maytoon Jubbat, a spokesperson for Bahrain's government, said that support from Gulf countries and the initiative to create jobs at the Interior Ministry "are not aimed at ending protests in Bahrain, but they do form part of an overall program to make necessary improvements for the benefit of all."

Jubbat reiterated the government's main focus was a proposed for a national dialogue whose a "political settlement can be agreed by consensus."

The opposition has refused to participate in the government's call for the national dialogue, led by the king's uncle, Prime Minister Sheikh Isa Salman al Khalifa, steps down. The prime minister has been in power 40 years.

The opposition says it plans to ratchet up pressure on the government if the national dialogue is not "inclusive." The protesters have also urged inaction and the country's financial industry, and Sharif, the former banker who now heads a secular opposition party known as Wefaq.

"We will not carry work or other activity that will take the economy on higher," Sharif said in an interview Sunday. "We are attacking peacefully all the institutions of the state." New York Times News Service

PROTESTERS, among them women, march against Lebanon's sectarian political system in Beirut on March 6. AFP

Women emerge as driving force in Mideast revolts

By Natasha Tadjeck

BEIRUT—As popular revolts continue to rock autocratic regimes across the Arab world, women are defying both taboos and stereotype and emerging as a driving force that is keeping the momentum of the protests going.

"Women played and continue to play an integral part in the uprisings and revolutions in Egypt, and what is key is that they are there physically present in the streets, showing their numbers," said Nadine Henry, senior researcher at Human Rights Watch.

"That is a hopeful sign, security told AFP. "They could not play a key role for the new governing structures that will emerge from these revolutions," in Tahrir and joins in long black robes and veils, tens of thousands of women have made their voices heard in the streets, from Sana'a to Cairo, from Manama to Gaza, to demand reform in a region long ruled by autocrats.

Inspired by the uprising that toppled Tunisia's Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, women turned out en masse in Egypt's Tahrir Square for weeks to demand the ouster of Hosni Mubarak, who quit on Feb. 11 after 30 years in power.

Bahrain, where thousands of mainly Shiite protesters have been demanding the fall of the Sunni Al Khalifa dynasty, has also witnessed a massive turnout of women, who form a sea of black in their traditional robes and headscarves at the entrance to the protest camp in Pearl Square.

And in the conservative countries of Yemen and Libya, women have overturned social norms and joined the tumultuous protests. Ali Abdullah Saleh and Moamar Kadhafi, searching desperately to stem the tide of unrest in the streets and talking on journalists on camera.

"Women play a decisive role in the region, from Tunisia to Egypt and Libya, and they have been a key factor in sparking the revolutions in every city," said Theodora Sutcliffe, a Yemeni activist who is spearheading the participation of women in the Gulf country.

"The revolution aims primarily to topple regimes, but it has also succeeded in doing away with the archaic traditions that have long held us routinely marginalized in the social and political life," Raymond told AFP.

"This has also been a social revolution. The role of women is helping create a new society. The Yemen revolution has helped women rise to a better place. But it is not only in the streets that women have found their voice.

While women from all walks of life have joined the protests, a young and educated segment of society is also turning to the new media to bring about change in their households.

Asma Maldoun, a young Egyptian woman whose video blog or vlog calling for an uprising in Egypt became a viral hit, is widely credited with having inspired Egyptians to take to the streets in defiance of a long-running autocratic regime.

"I am making this video to send you one message: if we still have any honor, if we want to live in dignity in this country, we should go out and join the protests on Jan. 25," said the fresh-faced, veiled activist.

"If you are a man, come down in the street," she said in Arabic-language video posted on YouTube on Jan. 19.

"If you are a woman you shouldn't protest ... should be man enough to come with me on Jan. 25."

Waves of dissent allegedly from Saudi Arabia, which has not yet witnessed major protests, have begun to surface on Facebook and Twitter, many under female usernames. AFP

Knives, Molotovs return to Cairo streets

CAIRO—Men in plain clothes armed with swords and Molotov cocktails (gasoline bombs) attacked protesters in Cairo on Sunday night during a demonstration demanding reform of security services with a reputation for brutality, witnesses said.

Dozens of men wielding knives and machetes and hurling bricks and petrol bombs confronted protesters at the headquarters of Egypt's state security, a force whose abuses fueled an uprising that toppled Hosni Mubarak, they said.

It appeared to be the first time armed men in plain clothes had deployed in force against reformers in central Cairo since Mubarak was forced to step down and hand power to the military, which has charted a course to democratic elections.

The unions evoked attacks on protesters in Tahrir Square by men claiming loyalty to Mubarak during the 18-day uprising that led to his downfall. Since then, activists have pressed demands for deeper reform, including a major shakeup of the police.

Egyptian soldiers, on the streets since the start of the uprising, stood into the air for several minutes to disperse the protesters. As they ran, the protesters were confronted by men they described as thugs.

The state news agency said the demonstrators were trying to break into the building.

A branch of the Interior Ministry, center of the state security apparatus say it functions as a domestic spy agency.

Its networks penetrated deep into society monitoring citizens and tapping phone lines. Interpolice have also in officers inside protesters to set against powers most opposition.

In the last two days, protesters have broken into 13 offices belonging to the state security apparatus across the country, seizing documents which they feared would be destroyed by officers to cover up abuses perpetrated by the force.

"The Army started firing at the air to disperse us," said Mohammed Sidiny. "We tried to run away but we were met by 200 thugs in plainclothes carrying sharp weapons on the other side," he said, putting the number of protesters at 3,000. Reuters

EGYPTIAN protesters confront soldiers in front of the state security headquarters in Cairo March 6. REUTERS

Prince Andrew woes become distraction as wedding nears

LONDON—Less than two months before a fairytale wedding anticipated by much of the world, Britain's royal family finds itself fighting on two fronts against distractions. Revelations that Prince Andrew, the queen's second son, is friends with a convicted sex offender, was photographed with a teenage prostitute, and has been accused of ties to Muammar Gaddafi's Libyan regime.

The Duke of York also hosted the son of the Tunisian dictator deadly before a popular uprising drove him from power—and the buildup of online resources has sparked calls that he be stripped of his role as special UK trade representative.

Buckingham Palace is indamage control mode as it attempts to keep the public's focus on the April 29 wedding between Prince William and tabloid favorite Kate Middleton, his university sweetheart.

British officials have rallied to Andrew's defense. The foreign secretary expressed his "confidence" in Andrew on Sunday, and a UK trade official who met Andrew also had close praise for the prince, saying he does a "very valuable job."

But pressure is mounting and there is growing speculation over how long Andrew can hang onto his post.

Andrew has created trouble before: His much-publicized divorce from Sarah Ferguson, his extravagant lifestyle, massive debt, a tell-all interview and a videotaped attempt to sell a UK tabloid access to Britain's royal family made Andrew a controversial figure around the world. Williams and Kate Middleton's courtship and upcoming nuptials.

Since becoming a special trade representative in 2001, Andrew has cut dozen controversial deals, usually taking junk trips in his role as an unpaid trade ambassador.

The latest revelations in the British media have centered on Andrew's friendship with convicted pedophile Jeffrey Epstein and claims that Andrew also had close ties to Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, son of the Libyan leader's sons.

Photos recently published in the British media show Andrew strolling in a park with Epstein. The New York billionaire jailed for soliciting underage prostitutes in Florida. More recently, a photograph emerged showing Andrew with his arm around the waist of the teenage prostitute at the center of the case.

While there has been no suggestion of any wrongdoing on the part of Andrew, the case of events has prompted some media searching over whether the prince is a suitable representative for UK interests abroad.

"The duke recognizes that his association with Jeffrey Epstein was, in retrospect, unwise," a person familiar with the matter said, noting that it can be understood Andrew will not be

PRINCE Andrew

photographed with Epstein again any time soon.

But Gadhafi's son remaining some who say enough is enough. Last week, British lawmaker Chris Bryant declared that modern had close links to Seif Gadhafi. Bryant called for Andrew to be fired, telling the House of Commons, "It's time we disposed with the services of the Duke of York."

Buckingham Palace on Sunday rejected Bryant's claims, saying Andrew's interaction with the Gadhafi regime and Tunisia's ousted dictatorship, too—fell within the remit of his job as special trade representative. AP

Japan foreign minister resigns over donation

TOKYO—Japan's foreign minister resigned Monday over alleged campaign donations, dealing a new blow to the struggling government of Prime Minister Naoto Kan.

The foreign minister, Seiji Maehara, 48, had received 250,000 yen, about $3,000, in donations since 2005 from a South Korean resident in Japan. Campaign laws bar politicians from accepting donations from foreign citizens.

Maehara announced his intention to step down at a hastily called press conference on Sunday night, a few hours after vowing Kan to convey his decision. The resignation was accepted on Monday.

Maehara, 48, is a hawkish member of the governing Democratic Party who had widely been seen as being next in line to replace Kan as prime minister. His resignation over what is a seemingly minor infraction is a measure of the increasingly weak position of Kan, whose public approval ratings have fallen into the high teens.

Kan, who took office in June, faces an uphill battle in Parliament in pass a series of bills related to next year's budget before the new fiscal year begins April 1. Perhaps the most crucial of the bills is one authorizing new government bonds to finance the Japanese government's huge deficits.

If he fails, Kan could be forced to call a new election or resign, which would make him the fifth Japanese prime minister in a row to be in office for a year or less. The succession of weak leaders has hobbled Japan's efforts to deal with chronic economic stagnation, a ballooning national debt and a rapidly aging population.

Fifth opposition parties in control of the upper house of Parliament, Kan would seem to have few prospects for breaking the political gridlock. The largest opposition party, the Liberal Democrats, has vowed to block bills in order to force an early election.

KAN

New York Times News Service

IN THIS ISSUE

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- GIR surges anew to record $64B /B6

Editor Raul O. Marcelo ● Assistant Editor Carmie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

DOF: Budget gap well below official cap

Full-year deficit of P314.4B still 5.3% higher than in '09

By Bernard W. Dominguez

THE BUDGET deficit reached P314.4 billion in 2010, P10.6 billion lower than the targeted cap set at P325 billion, due to improved revenue flow and prudent spending, the Department of Finance said.

Still, last year's budget gap was 5.3 percent higher than the P298.5 billion overspending seen in 2009, Finance Secretary Cesar V. Purisima yesterday said.

"The full-year deficit is equivalent to 3.7 percent of [GDP] better than the 3.9 percent program, and lower than the 3.9 percent incurred in 2009," Purisima said.

GDP, or gross domestic product, refers to the total output of products and services within a country at a given time.

While the Aquino administration intends to continue spending over the national budget to fund public services and projects, it wants to trim the deficit to 2 percent of the country's economic output.

"The lower-than-program deficit was realized because of improved revenue collections in the second half of the year, as well as prudent spending exercised by the Aquino administration," the finance chief said.

In 2010, government earnings totaled P1.2 trillion. It was 7.3 percent higher year-on-year, but 6.7 percent short of the official target.

Of the total, the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) amassed collections of P622.6 billion—9.6 percent higher year-on-year, even though it fell short of its target by 4.4 percent.

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) accounted for P209.2 billion—17.7 percent better than that of the previous year, but 7.7 percent less than the goal.

"Collections [of the BIR and the BOC] have benefited from the vigorous implementation of the 'Run After Tax Evaders' and the 'Run After The Smugglers' programs [of] the SIB and BOC, respectively, as well as administrative reforms," Purisima said.

Revenue of the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr) reportedly reached P84.3 billion, falling short of its goal by 19.6 percent.

Other revenue-collecting offices netted in a total of P71.7 billion, amounting for a short-

DOF/B2

PPP to start off with 5 projects worth $1B

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PHILIPPINES will start the bidding process later this month for contracts to operate two railways in the capital, part of a menu of more than $1 billion in projects to be offered to investors.

In a briefing featuring Energy Secretary Jose Rene Almendras said the first two projects to be placed on the auction block are the operation and maintenance contracts for the Light Rail Transit 1 and the Edsa Metro Rail Transit 3.

The bidding process for these two projects, he said, would start by end-March. Estimated project costs are P7.7 billion for the LRT 1 and P6.2 billion for the MRT 3.

Next month, the invitation to bid for the P1.6-billion Daang Hari-South Luzon Expressway link road project would be published, signaling the start of the bidding process.

AMO/B2

INDICATORS

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

March 7, 2011

43.300

STOCK MARKET

March 7, 2011

3.77

See more market news on Page B2

Share prices close slightly up

SHARE PRICES yesterday rose marginally as early gains were capped by late session profit-taking near the 5,000 level.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index added 2.11 points, or around, 0.1 per

SHARE/B2

Oil firms told to stock up, step up imports

By Jerry N. Barrios and Abigail L. Ho

THE GOVERNMENT ordered oil firms to ramp up imports and stocks amid growing concern about potential supply disruption due to unrest in the Middle East and North Africa.

The Department of Energy said it had already issued a circular, compelling oil companies to step up imports and maintain a minimum inventory sufficient for 15 days.

"The Philippines needs to be resilient in light of these events," Energy Secretary Jose Rene Almendras said in the statement.

He said the country's main concern was supply security.

Also, the government will not consider the rationing of oil products until supply from the Middle East has been disrupted, energy officials assured the public.

"The reason the flow of supply from the Middle East is cut, that's the time we'll do rationing. Right now, the big players have around 40 days of inventory. The small players, they don't have that much. Some have just seven-eight days worth of petroleum products in stock, but still, supply is enough," Almendras told reporters yesterday.

Saudi Arabia said they will supply as fast as long as they can. They have promised us, and we're holding on to that," Almendras added. "Every country in the world is hoarding up [their supply. That's what we're doing, too."

He said the DOE had already foreclosed the stockpiles for rationing, should the country need it.

The energy secretary said that, as early as December last year, the government started to hammer out an agreement between state-owned Philippine National Oil Co. (PNOC) and Saudi Aramco Overseas Co.

"We've had interactions with the Prince and oil minister [of Saudi Arabia]," Almendras told reporters, explaining that the deal is now aggressively being pursued as a result the two ministers are hoarding up their respective oil inventories.

This agreement is something that will not cost the country as much, compared to plans of regulating the oil industry and having to put up an oil price sta-

TIL/B2

The market's next move

MARKET RIDER

Dan Somera

IT'S HAPPENING now. It's easy that familiar, but when it happens, it never fails to surprise or bewilder.

This is what the stock market is all about. It's very difficult to read and reach move difficult to foretell.

A situation of this kind again/surprised last week—just when the market was starting to look good, something happened to unsettle it.

As a result, our talkwatar positive prognosis about the market...does it could be on a turnaround rally—is now in tab.

Tenuous market trend

The local market last week **lagged in a lesser than expected** performance. Four out of its five trading days traded net positive. It ended about 145.67 points higher on a weekly basis as it closed at 3,882.71 of the market's benchmark index.

But hours later after our positive head chase for the week, Wall Street reversed direction. It closed 88.32 points lower from the previous, at 12,169.96 of the Dow Jones Industrial average.

This happened despite encouraging **positive report** that 23 more employment rate fell to its lowest for the first time in nearly two years.

It certainly appears that negative **news more readily affect investors'** sentiments. Fighting in Libya continued to escalate last Friday prompting crude oil prices to rise 2.8 percent higher again to $106.42 a barrel.

Wall Street investors, therefore, were more unsettled by it than by lulled by positive news, such as the latest US unemployment data.

On the one hand, the climb of local market prices last week were accompanied by an elevation in the value in the amount of value turnover buoyed by positive corporate earnings results for 2010 from leading locally listed companies and by encouraging local and foreign economic data that filtered into the newspapers last week.

A week before, trading transactions only amounted to about P15.5 billion. Last week, trading transactions rose 68 percent more to a total of P25.491 billion.

Along with this general increase in value turnover of the market was the obvious change in the nature and amount of foreign transactions. Foreign buying activity increased and outstripped selling volume and value turnover, in the process.

While increased value turnover transaction is not a consistent and reliable independent indicator of market trend, associated with relatively lower volume of transactions, it brings about a more positive than negative implication.

The increasing number and amount of block sales also contributed to the market's present upward direction. More often than not, a bigger amount of block sale always resulted in overall uptick of the market.

Bottom line spin

On the market's next move, therefore, it makes sense to adopt what is called a "profit and loss trading plan." It's a trading strategy especially recommended by seasoned investors on tough market situations like what we are having at the moment.

As you are aware of, a "selective buy" last week was recommended. With the exemption of DMC and AEM which registered a respective market price increase equivalent to 5.56 percent and 5.49 percent, the **rest** featured just a similar price performances as that of other stocks with fundamentals. Their market performances ranged from a low of 0.9 percent to a high of 2.57 percent trading margins.

As usual, speculative stocks registered exceptional price performances within the same period. To mention one, Lepanto B Steatite World Corp. (LR) chalked up a 10.53-percent price increase within the week.

This could only mean that the market, in general, have fully discounted the fundamentals of most stocks based on their published 2010 corporate results. They are now under critical assessment on the basis of their projected 2011 **earnings...which remains to be seen.**

A "wait and see" approach is, therefore, recommended as guide human judgment on the basis of the market's difficult state.

To our knowledge, however, no ideal formula of a profit and loss trading plan does exist. The closest, in our mind, is the risk-reward standards that William O'Neil presented in his book, "How to Make Money in Stocks: A Winning System in Good Times or Bad," and from George M. Loehr's book "The Battle for Investment Survival."

Both of these says that a trading play must be controlled by some kind of a merchandising profit and loss plan. The plan should enable you to maximize the effects of your winnings and minimize the damage of losses to be incurred in your investments.

He said a 10 or 15 percent trading gain is a very good earnings target and a take loss limit of 8 percent is not only ideal but is "the" limit.

That the 10 percent take-loss limit is advocated by Gerald M. Loeb appears to be more applicable. This is because an 8 percent price drop of you does not result in a distinct sign of price reversal in our local setting.

This makes Loeb's take-loss cut of 10 percent more practical. I may add, though, that in case you feel safe, a take-loss limit up to 15 percent is actually still bearable.

I agree, nevertheless, that once a take-loss limit is established—whether it, 10 or 15 percent—it should not be compromised, like what O'Neil, Loeb and other successful investor/traders advocate.

(You may reach the Market Rider at marketrider@inquirer.com.ph or visit www.bapinabiotech.com)

DOF: Budget gap well below official cap

From page B1

full of 33 percent.

In 2010, the government spent P1.522 trillion. It was P97.3 billion less than planned expenses.

In December alone, the government incurred a budget deficit of P44.6 billion, which was 71.6 percent more than the P26 billion spent over the budget in the same month of 2009.

Also in December, the government raised a total of P330.3 billion in revenue. It was an increase year-on-year by 1.6 percent.

Of the total, the BIR shipped in P69.3 billion, which was 1.4 percent higher than year-ago collections.

The BOC contributed P25.7 billion, an increase of 36.4 percent.

The BIR turned in P93.6 billion. It was 10.1 percent lower than the previous year's revenue. Other offices had P4.3 billion, which represented a decline of 12.4 percent.

Expenditures in December reached P147.8 billion, or 11.9 percent higher year-on-year.

"Moving forward, the government will continue to work hard to ... increase revenue collections and enhance spending efficiency," Purisima said. "We are confident that this year's fiscal targets will be met."

Oil firms told ...

From page B1

bilization fund that will receive some $2 billion in capitalization, he added.

Apart from Saudi Arabia, the DOE is also working out a deal with the Russian government, which has already expressed interest in supplying fuel products to the country.

In an earlier interview, Energy Undersecretary Jose Ma. Layug Jr. said that the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) had already assured the government that there would be sufficient supply of crude—should the oil in the short and medium term periods.

But Almendras did admit that international fuel prices continued with its upward.

Based on the Mean of Platt's Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products, prices of gasoline in an average of $120.74 a barrel last week from the previous week's level of $118.8 a barrel, while diesel prices also increased to $120.58 related from a week ago level of $113.42.

This means that local prices of fuel are likely to increase again this week—the eighth to be implemented since the beginning of the year.

Oil companies however, have yet to make their respective advisories of any price adjustments, but some sources speculated of increases ranging from 85 to P1.50 a liter.

With a report from AFP

PPP to start off ...

From page B1

The project involves construction of a 3.68-kilometer, four-lane tunnel toll road, plus interconnectors, four local roads, an underpassing, a commute and drainage structures.

Sites to be opened for bidding on May and June are the P16.6-billion Ninoy Aquino International Airport Expressway Phase 2 and the P23-billion North Luzon Expressway Harbor Link road.

Almendras said the bidding process for these projects under the government's flagship public-private partnership program would be shorter than build-operate-transfer projects in the past. Instead of the usual 12-month process to reach the local Development Authority's Investment Coordination Committee, it would only take three to four months for PPP projects.

"We've formed a bid group to address the challenges of delays caused by the bureaucracy. We'll be holding consultative meetings even after the publication of the bid invitation. These meetings will be with those who have expressed interest in bidding for the project," he explained.

"We'll speed up the process to get ICC-approved Invest We want to cutting corner. With the old process, we discovered that a lot of the steps were sequential—you can't go on to the next step without completing another one. Now, we'll do each step simultaneously," he added.

For the entire year, Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima said at least 14 major PPP projects would be scheduled for bidding. Among the projects on these biggest ticket items, since PPP projects would also be placed on the auction block. *With a report from Reuters*

Share prices close ...

From page B1

core to close at 3,886.46.

The index breached 3,900 intra-day trade on the back of billion-plunge buying from last week's strong performance. But toward the end of the session, some investors pocketed gains.

Trading was then mixed across counters, with the financial, holding firm, property and services counters staying afloat. The industrial and mining/oil counters closed lower.

Value turnover slumped one to P3.62 billion from the previous session's P4.3 billion as weak sentiment on Wall Street tempered risk-taking. Overall trading was boosted by some P165 million in net foreign buying for the day.

Despite the slight index rise, decliners edged out advancers 85-81, while 49 stocks were unchanged.

PLDT, Alaska Equity Investor, Cebu Air, SM, Megaworld, EDC, Robinsons Retailing, JollibeE and BPI were among the day's climbers.

On the other hand, Manila Pavers Manufacturing, ICTSI, Ayala Land, SM Investments, PNB, Manufacturers Asia Cement and Ayala Corp. gained.

ICTSI announced was awarded a 30-year contract for the management, operation and development of the Batangas International Port of Batulao, Central's principal seaport. *Doris C. Dumlao*

HONDA

Honda Cars Makati (02) 902-9393 | Honda Cars Pasig (02) 988-1288 | Honda Cars Alabang (02) 902-9488 | Honda Cars Shaw (02) 917-3888 | Honda Cars Global City (02) 777-8111

HCMI @ 20 YEARS

Honda Cars Makati, Inc. (HCMI), a member of the Ayala group of companies, enjoys the distinction of being the first Honda car dealership in the Philippines opening a one-unit showroom in Bicutan, Parañaque in 1991. After its first year of operations, HCMI moved its first outlet to a new location in Magallanes, Makati in 1992 where it still stands today. Since then HCMI has expanded to ten outlets nationwide. Five of which cover key areas in Metro Manila – in Makati, Pasig, Alabang, Shaw, and Bonifacio Global City. Through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Honda Cars Cebu, Inc. (HCCI), it serves the Visayas and Mindanao regions – in Cebu, Mandaue, Cagayan de Oro, Negros Occidental, and Iloilo. All outlets offer quality products and world-class facilities and services associated with the Honda brand worldwide. In the past two decades, both have combined sales of over 125,000 vehicles accounting today for half of nationwide Honda sales and more than a million units serviced.

The growth of HCMI and its dealership operations reflect the strength and reliability of the Honda brand as much as the loyalty and trust of its customers. With a line-up of Euro 4 compliant vehicles and unparalleled service, HCMI is ready to embark on the next 20 years with an unwavering commitment to service quality and customer satisfaction.

On our 20th year, we take a moment to celebrate our milestones with the people who have made our success possible: you – our customer, and our associates, being the driving forces in our unending quest for service excellence.

Supporting the drive for a green and safe world

HONDA

Honda Cars Makati, Inc.

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A member of the Ayala group of companies

20

Years of

SERVICE and PARTNERSHIP

Realizing the broader need for environmental and corporate social responsibility, we have launched several initiatives that address issues related to the Green Dealer program (waste management, recycling and energy conservation), education, and social welfare. These include customer learning sessions for responsible motoring, Adopt-a-School Project, Agap Busers project, and the Bulik-Buterys program. Together with the Ayala group of companies, we actively participate in the Habitat for Humanity, Children's Heart, bank drives, tree planting and forest protection projects.

Through these activities we hope to contribute by doing our share in helping create a more sustainable and balanced society.

Expanding our Scope of Services

We presently offer regular preventive maintenance, general mechanical, body and paint repair together with trade-in, financing assistance, insurance, car registration and renewal services. For your convenience, we have a Service Hub at Greenbelt 1, in the central business district of Makati.

To serve your vehicle needs better, we are expanding our services in all our Metro Manila outlets to include nitrogen tire inflation, tire puncture protection, one-day paint job and headlight lens restoration.

You can also rely on assistance in times of roadside emergencies. Service vans will be ready to reach you anywhere within Metro Manila to provide quick service and repair.

Partnership through Customer Care

We believe customer care is providing you an overall personalized service by getting to know your driving experience, understanding your needs, knowing and maintaining your Honda vehicles. We provide you HondaTXT alerts and reminders for preventive maintenance service, follow-up calls and service canvass.

Recognizing that reliability, safety, and vehicle performance are paramount for every car owner, we tailor-fit various customer care activities for you such as learning sessions about responsible and defensive driving, fuel efficiency and basic troubleshooting.

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REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Hiring of Information and Communications Technology Consultant for the DWDP

1. The Republic of the Philippines has received a loan (Loan No. 7834-PH) from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) to fund the Social Welfare and Development Project (DWDP) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The DSWD intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to payments under a consultancy contract for the hiring of Information and Communications Technology Consultant for the DWDP to assist the Social Welfare Assistance Development Bureau (SWADB) in Pasay DSWD in coordination with the Management Information Systems Service (MISS) in implementing the Kinship and Orphanage Care (KOC). The KOC is an Information and Community-based system to establish a kinship and orphanage care network with the use of the internet for the various activities related to its social protection programs, projects, and services.

2. The Project aims to provide more protection of child welfare, to support more institutional and family care, to strengthen the capacities of the DSWD as a child protection agency, to efficiently implement the Alternative Parenting Program (APP), and to improve an efficient and functional National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTSPR) for possible inclusion/addition of the government's social protection programs.

3. The DSWD now invites international consultants to indicate their interest in providing the services. The duration of the assignment is six (6) months. Interested consultants must submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) together with a comprehensive Curriculum Vitae (CV).

4. The consultants shall be selected through Individual Consultants (IC) procedures as provided for in the loan agreement and in accordance with the Guidelines for the Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers (May 2004, Revised October 2006). Consultants may obtain further information at the DSWD on the assignment at [illegible] and may have a good command of English.

5. Interested consultants may obtain the Terms of Reference (TOR) and may hand deliver their EOI and CV at the address below or through email at [illegible] not later than 5:00 p.m. of 18 March 2011.

THE BAC SECRETARIAT
DSWD Bids and Awards Committee
c/o Ms. Gloriamia
4th Floor, DSWD Central Office Building
IBP Road, Constitution Hills, Quezon City
Telefax no. (02) 931-8101
Trunkline Nos. (02) 931-8101 loc. 208

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ALICIA G. CAMACHO**
Assistant Secretary and
Bids and Awards Committee Chairperson

(PB Mar 8, 2011)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Please be advised that **JEFF T. RIVERA** is no longer connected with **PGA Cars, Inc.** effective February 23, 2011. Any transactions entered into by the above person for and in behalf of **PGA Cars, Inc.** from the said date shall not be honored by the Company.

(PU-1 March 8, 2011)

INVITATION TO BID

The Provincial Government of Southern Leyte, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites bonafide bidders duly authorized to participate in the bidding for the following and all its line items/sub-projects:

Name of Project	Procurement of Office Materials
Brief Description	Multipurpose paper, multimedia (cd), polyester film (x-ray), bond paper (short), bond paper (long), ink, fax, memorandum pad, ballpen, and other office supplies
ABC	PhP 1,000,000.00
Delivery Period	Thirty (30) days

Prospective bidders should have appeared in a valid/current bidder prequalification for one (1) particular or various categories of the proposed projects/jobs bidding. The Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders from the BAC upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Five Hundred Pesos (PhP 500.00) for each set.

All participating bidders of Public Expenditure and Accounting, Electronic Procurement Systems, Procurement Monitoring, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be guided by Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 17 - March 30, 2011
2. Pre-bid Conference	March 17, 2011
3. Receipt/Opening of Bids	March 30, 2011

Bid documents will be submitted in compliance with the requirements and payment of the bid documents amount of P 1,000.00 to the Provincial Treasurer's Office.

The Provincial Government of Southern Leyte reserves its reasonable prerogative to disqualify any or all bidders in any stage/s of the bidding process without incurring any liability.

Approved by:

HONORATO B. MERCADO JR.
PB, BAC Chairman

(PU-1 March 8, 2011)

4th STOCK MARKET LEARNING SERIES

March 14, 15, 16, 17 & 18
(9:00am to 12:00 noon)
Venue: Makati Stock Exchange / Makati Sports Club

Learning Objectives:
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]

Speakers Invitation:
- **Mr. Jay Peñaflor,** PSE Sr. Market Education Specialist
- **Mr. Ramon Dey,** BDO Economist
- **Mr. Leo Querol,** Head, PSE Market Education Department
- **Prof. Tabbing Paz,** UP's Sr. Professorial Lecturer of Economics

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REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

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TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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Goldsbury Dowdell

People, Events & Products

Environmental confab slated

THE UNIVERSITY San Jose-Recoletos in collaboration with the Ateneo Power Semi Pelo Inc. will spearhead the 2nd Environmental Stewardship Conference on March 10 to 11 at the College of Education Review Room, 4th floor, St. Gabriel Archangel Building, USJ-R Basak Campus. The activity is being undertaken in line with its "Win On Waste" program, an advocacy that aims to inspire educators, students, professionals and community leaders to be active ecological stewards united in the common clean-and-green work of saving Mother Earth. Critical issues concerning the environment will be discussed by The Climate Change Volunteers (TCP) hosted by former UP Vice President Dr. Soto during the Climate Project vice Pacific Summit at Jakarta Indonesia. The conference will culminate with an exercise. Interested parties may call the USJR Basak Campus Directors' Office at (032) 231-1906 or (032) 411-5600.

Rogin-E's Last Man Running

LAST FEB. 20, runners from all over Metro Manila descended the roads of Mckinley Hill in "Rogin-E's Last Man Running". The highlight of the event was a marathon that was actually the first of its kind in the Philippines - a race where the objective was to literally be the last person running for 7 straight hours despite the complete zero-visibility and challenging weather conditions. If contenders ran and the end but the most crowded to the race to Mayor Bolbar who ran an astonishing 82.3km. He himself recalled the experience, running even after all the competitors had given up. He also won P50,000, proving once again his popularity. Alongside this race, the event also hosted a 5K and 10K run. The 5K category were won by Nelson Digdon for male and Luisa Ramirez for female while for the 10K category, Mary Sunday for male and Jhe-an Banayag for female prevailed.

Hottest 'tween tandem finds their perfect fit

WHAT IS SYNERGY 8? TV shows and film appearances, Barbie Forteza and Joshua Dionisio are undoubtedly two of the hottest young stars today. And as they flaunt effortless style, they need a perfect match to help them manage their hyper online-activities and stay connected with their friends, families and even their fans. Good thing there's the unbeatable bandwidth and internet size of Digital DSL bundle. Digital DSL was the first in the country to offer that, and bundles bundles that enable people to have access to internet anywhere, anytime, seamless services to their subscribers. Now, for as low as P999 a month, subscribers get to enjoy unlimited voice calls and Internet with speeds of up to 768 Kbps plus other additional One can avail of the full set of mobile phones from Nokia, Samsung and My Phone depending on the P99, 999, plan that they choose. Subscribers can also opt to have a Wi-Fi modem router for free. For more information, log on to www.digitech.ph.

Tobacco Intervention Skills at Papa Convention

THE PHILIPPINE Ambulatory Pediatric Association Inc. (Papa) will hold its 16th Annual Convention on March 9 and that the Cebu United Convention Center in Cebu City. One of the highlights of this convention is the Basic Tobacco Intervention Skills Training on March 7 at the same venue and is open to all pediatricians, internists, family physicians and residents on the scourge of tobacco exposure, issues and updates on disease prevalence, behavioral disorders, tuberculosis, allergy, asthma, obesity, overnutrition, dermatology, oral health, school health, and dengue. Fees will be to be tackled. For inquiries, contact Ryan Alba at 0910-8002592.

'Classics are Back' at Gelatissimo

GELATISSIMO HAS brought back its top 5 classic gelato flavors following in their popularity from past promotions. The 5 flavors in the "Classics are Back" range were chosen from past promotions including "Rich Amid Chocolate", "Tsa-Lover" and "Flavors of the World". Indulge in Gelatissimo's classics - do as the friend-ists and enjoy Friendi Critters! Kindness. If you're a chocoholic, treat yourself to Chocolate Fudge, Dirty Caramel Fudge with Peanut Butter or Nutty-Le-Chur. Sweet and Sour Red Rock Kisses, experience the Dairy Kisses Berry Paduca. Whatever the Gelatissimo stores involved in the Philippines formerly the "Classics are Back" gelato range. Read more at the stores are available for a limited time only. Visit www.gelatissimo.com.ph to locate your nearest store.

Whirlpool to hold Warehouse Sale

WHIRLPOOL HOME Appliances will be holding its regular 3-day Warehouse Sale this March 11 and 12 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at its warehouses in Mandaluyong, Pasig and Cebu. Items on sale are Class-A quality which are brand-new appliances but are slightly dented or scratched. Discounts on selected items can go up to 60%. All products are covered with a one-year warranty on parts and labor. The Warehouse Sale will be held in Mandaluyong at Lot 2-3 and 5, Block 3, Phase III Bermuda St., Sterling Industrial Park, Libertad, Mayapyap in Bulacan, and Warehouse No. 60, Cardiac Compound, Cebu city. Whirlpool Cebu is also the exclusive distributor. contact 113-0555 (Manila) or (032) 340-2900 / 346-2186 (Cebu).

Philippine health care for Americans, expatriates and balikbayans

AMERICARE Global has redesigned a comprehensive medical suite of services it offers to its Members. As a medical and dental facility Ltd. it has put together some of the finest medical doctors and dentists from the reputable hospitals and clinics which are known to board of international standards in health care. These medical doctors and dentists as professional providers are rated by the American Care Medical Members after consultations or performance of any procedures. This valuable tool assists the new members in choosing their professional providers. Members of AmeriCare Global enjoy preferred rates for the services of AmeriCare's Global Providers. These rates are paid directly to the said Medical provider such as hospitals and clinics. As a consequence, AmeriCare Global members enjoy their privacy and the doctor-patient relationship is maintained. Americare Global has established strong ties and has its guaranteed with its accredited providers. Here is added benefit. The most efficient and convenient manner for a smooth medical tourism trip. AmeriCare Global offers a wide array of services for its members. It offers (Philippine) visa processing, i.e. tourist visa, tourist visa extension, quota visa, non-quota visa including tax-waived visa. It has, in fact, partnered with a reliable courier both in the Philippines and abroad to facilitate multiple and temporal transmittal of documents. Through its tieup with valet mechanism, visa processing time is shorter. Home care services and physical therapy are available to those members who need follow-up support services at home or in the comfort of their hotels. Personal chauffeurs are also accessible for pick-ups and drop-offs or long distance driving. All of these chauffeurs undergo strict training for basic life saving and rescue duties. AmeriCare Global's offers also package tours at very reasonable costs and is also able to customize trips and tours depending on a pre-determined budget. AmeriCare Global has partnered with Mercury Drugs, LBC courier services, and Philippine Airlines. It is recognized as a full partner in the Philippine Medical Tourism Program by the Philippine Department of Health and is accredited by the Philippine Retirement Authority through its tourist representative. Active Health Care Referral Services.

Arg Panday wood products now 'Dacrel-treated'

ARG PANDAY Lumber and Construction Supply eliminates all wood worries as it partners with Newsom & Mueller Philippines for total protection and preservation of its wood products. The companies, together with Acdigo Marketing officially signed a co-branding agreement recently at Blanco Pole Hotel in Davao City for the usage of Newsom & Mueller's product called Dacrel Dacrel-CC for Arg Panday's vacuum pressure treatment process. Dacrel Dacrel-CC is the only insecticide and fungicide combination in one bottle available in the market today. It is manufactured and formulated in the Philippines by Mayer Group Services and provides unparalleled solutions to distinct wood problems like termite infestation, staining and decay to fully preserve the strength and beauty of wood. Dacrel also comes in two other variants. These are Dacrel TMCI-20, an above-ground wood protectant against subterranean and dry wood termites; and Dacrel-F a wood fungicide that controls decay, rotting, stains and moulds.

FAMINY SIRILANO OPENS NEW SALON

Make-up guru, designer, and entrepreneur Faminy Sirilano recently held a double celebration with birthday and the formal inauguration of his make-salon which is now located at No. Stadium St., Tomas Morato Extension, Quezon City. The new make branch boasts of a month-large opera, allotted parking area and a more convenient place for clients to dress and touch-ups. Aside from the usual services that Faminy Sirilano offers like hair rebonding, hair coloring, hair cutting and perming among the like, the clients can now experience the newest hair treatment from Germany called System Professional by Wella. Aside from the salon services, the brand-in-SE has also begun where salons in providing gowns and clothings for different occasions and is also open for [illegible] as well. Faminy invites everyone to come and visit his newest salon located at No. 34 Scout Madrinan St., Tomas Morato in Quezon City. Phones are Philippine Constituent Faminy. He starts for inquiries call 361-9666, 361-2228 and 361-2245.

1ST INTL AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM EXPO

The Department of Tourism and A-One Events International Inc., behind their commitment to build and strengthen economy through the Tourism-national Agriculture and Tourism Expo! on June 10th-July 2, 2011 at Halls B and C, World Trade Center, Pasay City, Finnish, Tourism Undersecretary Rosanna Jaimela, Business Secretary Mike Cruz, Kenneth Boing and Erlan Tingco provided assistance in making the said event [illegible]

Oil hits 2-1/2 yr highs as Libya turmoil deepens

SINGAPORE—US crude rose more than $2 to a 28-month high above $106 on Monday as civil war brewed in Libya, while investors kept a close eye on top exporter Saudi Arabia, home to most of OPEC's spare capacity and where clerics at the weekend stormed against protests. April US crude rose as much as $2.01 to $106.44 a barrel, the highest price since September 2008, adding to concerns that high energy costs may derail the global economic recovery.

"If tension intensifies or if there are further supply disruptions elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa region, oil prices have risks on the upside," said Jeremy Lim, a Singapore-based oil analyst at iGOtrade.

This year's 16 percent rally in US crude has prompted the Obama administration to consider releasing emergency oil stockpiles as policymakers seek ways to cushion a negative spillover to the world's biggest economy.

"The concern is that with what we are seeing in Libya, it's purely fear driving the market," said Jonathan Barratt, managing director at Commodity Broking Services in Sydney.

ICE Brent crude for April gained $6.35 to $117.92, still more than $2 away from the contract's peak this year at $119.79 on Feb. 24. Ice petrol, are over US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) has narrowed to above $11 from more than $15 last week. Qatar's Energy Minister said on Monday Opec was evaluating the situation in the oil markets and the need to convene for an unscheduled meeting, but added that there was no shortage of supply in the market.

Saudi Arabia has already pledged to lift any supply gap caused by the disruption of oil exports from Libya. The kingdom is pumping around 9 million bpd and has spare capacity of around 3.5 million bpd, a senior Saudi source told Reuters last week.

But Saudi Shiites last week staged small demonstrations in the Eastern Province, which holds much of the kingdom's oil wealth, fueling claims to Iran protests.

"Each time the price moves up a little, people are worried more in the market. Once it's heading itself, it will continue to rise," Barratt said, adding $120 may be the peak without further supply disruptions.

Oil prices may slip back to more "realistic" levels around $80 later this year, Barratt said. High oil prices also threaten Asian economies. "If $120 is a barrel, we estimate oil prices to shave off 1.5 percentage point from baseline growth" for Asia excluding Japan, ABN economists Sanjay Mathur and Tirk Lueth said. Reuters

Global markets fret about longer term impact on growth

Japan beating deflation

TOKYO—Japan is expected to make progress in beating deflation but it has a long way to go, a senior Bank of Japan official said, stressing that the central bank is sticking to its ultra-easy policy bias.

BOJ Deputy Governor Hiroshi Yamaguchi said annual growth in Japan's core consumer prices, the BOJ's key price gauge, has returned to close to zero percent after remaining negative for most of the past decade, and is likely to stay positive.

"But there are uncertainties that pose risks to the economy," said, as the yen started to spike in commodity prices as well as the outlook for the US and European economies, Yamaguchi told parliament on Monday.

"The BOJ will take appropriate action if economic and price conditions warrant," he said, adding that the central bank stands ready to ease policy further if growth sharply undershoots its forecasts.

Inflation from stemming from the spike in commodity prices have mitigated downside risks around the BOJ's core inflation view.

But the BOJ is sticking to its ultra-easy policy bias as it feels soaring commodity costs will only gradually work their way through the broader economy due to sluggish domestic demand.

Inflation is a far less imminent concern for Japan, which is still mired in grinding deflation, although the rise in commodity prices is now pushing up consumer inflation in coming months. Reuters

PEOPLE walk past an electric quotation board flashing the Nikkei stock index of the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) in front of a securities company in Tokyo. Japanese shares tumbled on Monday with sentiment hit by spiking oil prices and fears of continued unrest in North Africa and the Middle East, with automakers falling. AFP

Asian stocks slip as oil concerns bite

HONG KONG—Asian stocks declined yesterday as concerns over the Middle East weighed on sentiment.

Asian markets have recovered following volatile oil to recent weeks, but the MSCI region index is about 2 percent away from a 2-1/2 year peak scored in January, indicating markets have been largely resilient to the Libyan crisis.

Still, investors are worried that a prolonged period of high oil prices could stifle economic growth and erode corporate profits, while adding to inflationary pressures in emerging Asia.

On Monday, the MSCI ex-Japan index fell nearly 1 percent.

US crude rose to a 2-1/2 year high on Monday as civil war brewed in Libya, while investors kept a close eye on top exporter Saudi Arabia, home to most of Opec's spare capacity, where clerics lashed protests at the weekend.

A (reasonably strong batch of US data on Friday that showed the jobless rate falling to a near two-year low failed to boost sentiment, as investors remained firmly focused on the developments in the Middle East and the resulting longer-term impact on oil.

The spike in oil combined with resulting food prices presents fresh problems for central banks in Thailand, Malaysia, South Korea and New Zealand, who head for policy meetings this week.

The region is a big importer of oil and market players are worried that sharp increases in prices would stifle growth and fuel inflationary pressures.

The (HSI) MSCI index is trading at 12.7 times forward 12-month earnings, as per with its long-term average—indicating that markets are not fairly valued.

"Higher oil prices are a key factor weighing on investor sentiments. Shorter energy costs have numerous negative implications for a manufacturing-focused economy like South Korea," said US. Hsun, a market analyst at Hyundai Securities.

Takeshi Nikkei average, Australia's S&P/ASX 200 index and South Korea's KOSPI ended down more than 1 percent each.

Indian stocks fell by nearly 2 percent after a key ally of the ruling coalition quit, threatening its policy paralysis.

Wall Street erased most of its weekly gains on Friday, with the S&P 500 index falling by 0.74 percent. The CBOE Volatility Index , Wall Street's fear gauge, was slightly to 19.51 but stayed well below a May peak of 48. Rising tensions in the Middle East also stoked demand for precious metals and government bonds.

Gold , often sought in times of geopolitical uncertainty, rose to near a two-year high at $1,439.40 an ounce, while silver surged 3 percent to 32-year highs as investors piled into safe havens. Gold hit a record $1,440 last week.

Meanwhile, crude prices stabilized after Friday's gains with benchmark ten year notes at 3.49 percent, a shade above a one-month low of 3.39 percent hit earlier this month. Reuters

German firms seek tough euro rules

BERLIN—Germany's mainstream lobbies on Monday called on countries sharing the euro currency to adopt tough rules in an upcoming summit aimed at sorting out Europe's debt crisis.

In an open letter to euro zone leaders, the heads of the BDI, BDA, DIHK and ZDH industry associations urged countries to adopt German proposals aimed at strengthening fiscal discipline.

"We thus support the government's proposals for solid budgets and competitive European economies," the leaders wrote.

"Unlimiting debt—as is being debated—would on the contrary overburden strong states and weaken Europe," Berlin, with Paris' backing, wants more strong countries to agree to a competitiveness pact at the March 11 meeting in Brussels in exchange for boosting the scope and capacity of an emergency fund for bailing out countries cut off from the markets.

Financial markets are watching the drama closely, particularly Germany's reluctance to pour more money into the fund, and the surprise announcement last week that the ECB may raise interest rates this spring—heightening anxiety about Europe's ability to crawl out of the global recovery.

In the letter, the associations described the pact as a sensible extension of Europe's budgetary rules, and limited plans gaining support in Europe to adopt debt ceilings nationally.

"The incentive for solid fiscal policy must be strengthened through debt brakes in national constitutions. If a country breaks the stability and growth pact, sanctions must come automatically," it read. Reuters

Opening of new airport in Dubai delayed to '12

DUBAI—The opening of the passenger terminal at Dubai's new airport will be further delayed to 2012, but the emirate's air industry should benefit from unrest in the Arab world, the chief executive of Dubai Airports said.

"Over the next year or so, we are not adding large amounts of higher passenger numbers," Paul Griffiths told Reuters on Sunday. "It [Al Maktoum airport] will become a scheduled passenger and cargo airport during 2012."

The opening of the Al Maktoum airport, estimated to cost around $34 billion, in passenger has had been already delayed in the last quarter of 2011 from March.

Dubai's second airport, billed as the world's largest when it becomes fully operational, should have an expected passenger capacity of up to 160 million people a year.

Griffiths also said the region-

al airport saw tentative re-routing from travels from regional hotspots to Dubai, a member of the United Arab Emirates, benefiting its economy.

"I don't think the unrest in Egypt or other parts in the Middle East and North Africa is having a significant effect at all. Actually, I think it is quite positive," he said.

"Some people that were considering other areas are coming to Dubai because they are seeing it as a very stable place to be," he said.

Turmoil across the Arab world, which has toppled leaders in Egypt and Tunisia and is now challenging autocratic regimes in Libya as well as those in Bahrain and Oman, has disrupted tourist travelers.

Dubai, known for opulent hotels and artificial palm-shaped islands, has so far escaped the regional unrest, which started in December. Reuters

Sun is shining on robust Asian tourism trade

HONG KONG—The sun is shining on the tourism trade in Asia-Pacific with double-digit growth expected this year, figured largely by Chinese and Indian middle classes packing their bags for a break abroad.

Strong economies, the proliferation of low-cost airlines and a burgeoning consumery of coffee shoppers are adding to the region's rosy outlook.

There were an 11 percent rise in arrivals in the region overall last year, according to preliminary data from the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).

And 2011 is also expected to be a strong year.

"Asia will witness international arrivals at close to double that of the world average growth rates," PATA's deputy CEO Mario Hardy told AFP.

"It's Asians traveling to Asia, that's the key in all these instances and the big shift we are seeing globally in the tourism markets. It's all happening in Asia now."

South Asia reported the strongest arrivals growth with a gain of 14 percent, highlighting a record year for India, which posted 5.8 million foreign inbound visits for the year, a nine percent increase.

Over 70 million people went to Southeast Asia, 12 percent up on 2009, with Vietnam, Singapore and the Philippines all contributing to record growth.

Australia and New Zealand and the Pacific islands also had a record year for tourist arrivals.

The total travel market in Asia-Pacific is expected to reach $1212 billion this year, reflecting a near five percent increase over 2010, according to industry analysts PhoCusWright.

Growth in the region is being boosted partly by a newly minted middle class in the emerging populations of China and India—around 46 million Chinese traveled abroad last year, an did over four million Indians, PATA say.

And they take their wallets and credit cards with them.

Chinese travelers spent almost $40 billion in 2009 while Indians, another growing consumer class from the World Trade Organization...and that's excluding the cost of getting there.

"For some markets Chinese and Indian tourists are extremely important," said Hardy said.

The proliferation of low-cost airlines, particularly in Southeast Asia, is also a shot in the arm for the industry.

Carriers such as Malaysia's AirAsia and Cebu Pacific in the Philippines, among others, continues to expand aggressively.

People from Europe and North America are also heading to Asia and the Pacific to their shores—arrivals from Europe were up 11 percent to 24 million, Pata says, while arrivals from North America grew by over 10 percent to 13 million.

"Travel has generally rebounded from the global financial crisis," Carl Jones, director of advisory services for American Express Business Travel in the region, told AFP. "Now we're seeing a recovery, which make up a large portion of Asia-Pacific short vacations in neighboring countries will continue to be more popular. As nations grow, so does their exposure and disposable income, leading to trips to far-flung afield.

"Asia-Pacific will continue to be a growth engine for travel—for both business and leisure." And many of those will look their trip online, another area of growth—personal growth for the travel trade.

US Internet travel booking giant Expedia plans to launch at least five new Expedia branded sites throughout Asia, having already recently launched a new site in Singapore.

"Globally in 2011, we're seeing growth rates in markets like China that are outpacing the growth that we saw in 2010," an Expedia spokeswoman told AFP.

Asia to be biggest aircraft market by 2029, Airbus predicts

HONG KONG—Asia will emerge as the world's biggest aircraft market by 2029, accounting for a third of world trade plane deliveries as the middle class drives demand, Airbus said Monday.

The European plane maker also said it was experiencing surging orders Chinese demand for corporate jets said that sales to Chinese buyers could approach levels in the Middle East.

Worldwide, air traffic is set to double over the next 15 years, with the Asia-Pacific region set to overtake North America and Europe as the largest air transport market, making delivery of about 8,360 new planes worth $1.2 trillion by 2029, Airbus said.

That figure will represent about 32 percent of world deliveries, up from the region's 16 percent share between 1999 and 2009, Airbus said as it released its Asia-Pacific Market Forecast.

"Asia-Pacific will lead this air traffic by 2029," Chris Emerson, the firm's senior vice president of product strategy and market forecast, told a press briefing in Hong Kong.

"In Asia, more and more people can ride and wanting to fly every day," he added.

The aerospace industry will grow 4.8 percent annually over the next two decades, the company said, while the sector doubled a record $90 billion operating profit last year, a rise also led by Asian carriers.

The Asia-Pacific area will grow faster than the worldwide average, with passenger numbers rising 5.8 percent a year, and the cargo business growing seven percent annually also higher than the 5.5 percent worldwide average, Airbus said.

Emerson said Asia had the "youngest and newest" fleets, with aircraft that burn less fuel than older models, while the region is emerging as a key growth area among low-cost carriers.

Airbus also said its corporate jet operation set a company record last year, delivering 33 jets worth $1.5 billion, with China the firm's fastest growing market.

Chinese customers accounted for about 25 percent of the company's business jet sales last year, with that figure expected to close to on the Middle East's 35 percent share in "a couple of years," said Francois Chanelle, the company's vice president of executive and private aviation.

Sales in the hard-hit North American market have been "extremely robust" and the region's market is coming back thanks to orders from Russia, Chanelle added. AFP

BUSINESS

GIR surges anew to record $64B

BSP cites 40% year-on-year expansion

By Michelle K. Basino

THE COUNTRY'S gross international reserves (GIR) continued its break records, posting a new high of $64 billion in February, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported.

Central bank officials said this development should raise the level of confidence of foreign investors and creditors with the Philippines.

The BSP said that the GIR, the total amount of foreign currencies and gold holdings under the care of the central bank, reached $63.91 billion by the end of February.

The amount marked a 40-percent expansion from the $45.76 billion registered in the same period last year. Moreover, the latest GIR was up by 0.6 percent from the previous historic high of $63.54 billion seen in January.

The GIR in February would be enough to cover 10.5 months worth of imported goods and services. The figure is also 6.2 times the country's foreign currency-denominated debts maturing within a year.

According to international standards, a country's GIR may be considered comfortable if it can cover at least four months worth of imports.

The BSP said the increase in the February GIR was fueled in part by income from foreign exchange operations and investments in foreign currency-denominated instruments, bulk of which are US treasuries.

Rising sort of gold likewise drove the value of the country's gold holdings, which are part of the GIR.

"Major inflows that contributed to the increase in the GIR level consisted of receipts from foreign exchange operations and income from investments abroad, as well as revaluation gains on the BSP's gold holdings arising from sustained increase in gold prices in the international market," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a statement.

BSP officials said the growing reserves would enhance confidence of foreign investors and creditors in the country's ability to meet its external obligations.

The BSP has projected that, by the end of 2011, the GIR will range between $68 billion and $70 billion.

PLDT JOINS PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE PRE-LAUNCH COCKTAILS. PLDT Corporate Business Group recently joined the pre-launch cocktails of the PSE Trade Floor at the Makati and Taguig City.

The PSE Trade is a Candidate Trading System acquired by the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) from NYSE Technologies. It offers flexibility through a wide range of asset class and derivatives. It was expected to improve the capacity of the PSE to handle any future share increase in value turnover. Eventually, the new trading system will lead the way for cross-border trading with other Southeast Asian Bourses like Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

Shown in top photo are (left to right) are: PLDT Wealthcare's Myrnan Mendiola Perez, PSE President Hans Sicat, PSE Director & Investment Division Head Manuel Sy, PLDT AVP & Head of Corporate Business Group Joey Hernandez and PLDT Head of Corporate Relationship Business Jeff Montemayor.

Yield on gov't debt paper falls

By Konrad W. Domingo

THE YIELD on short-term government debt paper fell across the board on yesterday's auction at the Bureau of the Treasury as investors anticipate a rate hike by monetary authorities.

The interest rate on the 91-day Treasury bill fell by 61.4 basis points to an average of 1.046 percent.

Also, the rate to govern more of the 182-day T-bill fell by 62.3 bps to an average of 1.791 percent while that for the 364-day T-bill fell by 17.1 bps to 2.667 percent.

Deputy Treasurer Nilsaverda S. Mendiola said in an interview that the resulting rates were mostly lower than prevailing levels in the secondary market.

Mendiola said that debt done through the Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp. yielded 1.1794 percent for 91 days, 1.6875 percent for 182 days, and 3.1 percent for 364 days.

Asked whether the event is a statement of PH$ inflow worth of total Thonds helped ease rates, Mendiola said this was not necessarily so.

"Investors must have been saving mainly to meet demand from their clients," Mendiola said. "However, yesterday's announcement of the 2010 fiscal position must have also influenced the auction results."

The Department of Finance yesterday announced that the budget deficit in 2010 reached P314.4 billion, less than the planned P325 billion.

"They must have seen that the [budget] deficit trends to maintain fiscal discipline," Mendiola said.

But more than that, he said, investors must be expecting the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to finally begin tightening its policy rates, which have remained at record lows since July 2009.

In yesterday's auction, investors brought forward a total of P527.09 billion, more than double the P8.5 billion offer.

Tenders for the three-month bill reached P6.14 billion or more than four times the P1 billion on offer.

Bids for the six-month bill totaled P4.6 billion or almost thrice the P1.5 billion offered. Tenders for the one-year bill hit reached P7.75 or almost twice the P4 billion offered.

The BTr valued a total of P10.5 billion from all three tenors, P1.8 billion more than the original offer.

Bidding rules allow the BTr to double the amount it would award for non-competitive bids if, for a given tenor, such bids account for less than a quarter of all tenders.

Non-competitive bidders do not indicate a rate in their tenders, and they will get the resulting average rate when their bids are accepted.

Cut in power bills expected this month

By Jerry E. Esmero

CUSTOMERS of power distributor Manila Electric Co. can look forward to a slight reduction in their power bills this March as the generation charge fell by 1.02 centavos per kilowatt-hour to P6.8463 per kWh.

Households consuming 100 kWh a month can expect a decrease of P7.16 in their electricity bills, while those that use 200 kWh a month will enjoy a P15.47 reduction for March, according to Meralco.

The country's largest power distributor added that households that consume 300 kWh and 400 kWh monthly can also expect decreases of P23.81 and P32.74, respectively.

Meralco said in a statement that the reductions in electricity bills can be attributed not only to the decline in the generation charge, but also to the drop in transmission and system loss charges in residential customers of 2.36 and 1.49 centavos per kWh, respectively.

The decline in the generation charge can meanwhile be attributed to a corresponding drop in the cost of electricity sourced from Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM), which went down by P1.2245 per kWh.

The price of electricity sourced from the Meralco's independent power producers also registered at P7.21 centavos per kWh decrease for the supply month of February. Meralco sources from these IPPs, namely the Quezon Power Philippines Ltd. with its coal-fired facility, the 1,000-megawatt Ilijan plant, and the 500-MW San Gabriel natural gas-fired power plants, which are both owned by Lopez-led First Gen Holdings.

According to Meralco, it sourced 43.3 percent of its requirements from the IPPs; 45.1 percent from Napocor; and only 9.6 percent from the WESM.

Meralco, however, warned its consumers of possible increases in electricity bills in the coming summer months, when electricity consumption usually peaks.

Gov't port deal hangs in the balance

By Paolo G. Montecillo

(Continued)

AHEAD OF THE release of the final results of a review of the Greater Manila Access (GMA) Ports Project, a ranking Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) official said the deal with French port-operator Eiffel Menarini will likely be renegotiated.

"That is really the direction of the review. There's no way that this project should be approved in its current form," the official, who requested anonymity, said in an interview.

But the DOTC would tread lightly to avoid a protracted legal battle since the project had been approved although the implementation has been delayed because of the review.

Eiffel Menarini, a consortium between state-owned Eiffel Constructora Metalúrgica and Mariave SA, has already questioned the DOTC's initial cancellation that shunned the project was too expensive and too large for the country's needs.

"What is the basis [of the computation] and was there an 'apples-to-apples' comparison of the components involved?" the consortium asked in a letter to Transportation Secretary Jose de Jesus on March 2.

"We were bothered because we believe that the Bo Ilo ports contracted with us are reasonably priced considering their high quality, modern design, adjustability [and] is the life and modularity," the company added.

DOTC officials are expected to raise the possibility of a review of the contract in a meeting with Iloilo Eiffel Menarini representatives on March 8.

Doubts on whether the project should even be considered as an ODA-funded deal have also been raised, given that BSP Pardini is a private, commercial bank.

Although the French government is the lender's biggest investor, the state only holds preferential shares that do not give it power in the company's board.

ODA loans are supposed to be deals between governments wherein a more developed country provides cheap funds for the development of a smaller country.

Rep. Ben Bernardo of Eastern Samar over the weekend filed House Resolution No. 1023 seeking an investigation in aid of legislation of the alleged overpricing of the Bo Ilo project.

But fellow lawmaker Marco Jojo Nep. Rodolfo Antonino, an ally of former President and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, has urged that DOTC not to let politics get in the way of the implementation of a legitimate project.

Delaying the project any further would have repercussions on the country's image to potential foreign investors, he said.

During a hearing before the Commission on Appointments, the lawmaker had asked De Jesus to explain why progress on the GMA Ports Project has been slow.

SPECIAL REPORT

De Jesus said the DOTC was still obtaining documents for similar deals from other international ports-operators to ensure that the products offered by the French firm were priced competitively, seconds of the hearing showed.

"The cost appears to be a little high ... the DOTC wants to be sure that any price paid is justified," he said. He added that the project review will likely be completed by March 15.

One of President Benigno Aquino III's main campaign promises was to investigate reports of alleged corruption by the previous administration.

Antonino said in a statement that the reductions in electricity bills can be attributed not only to the decline in the generation charge, but also to the drop in transmission and system loss charges in residential customers of 2.36 and 1.49 centavos per kWh, respectively.

The decline in the generation charge can meanwhile be attributed to a corresponding drop in the cost of electricity sourced from Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM), which went down by P1.2245 per kWh.

The price of electricity sourced from the Meralco's independent power producers also registered at P7.21 centavos per kWh decrease for the supply month of February. Meralco sources from these IPPs, namely the Quezon Power Philippines Ltd. with its coal-fired facility, the 1,000-megawatt Ilijan plant, and the 500-MW San Gabriel natural gas-fired power plants, which are both owned by Lopez-led First Gen Holdings.

According to Meralco, it sourced 43.3 percent of its requirements from the IPPs; 45.1 percent from Napocor; and only 9.6 percent from the WESM.

Meralco, however, warned its consumers of possible increases in electricity bills in the coming summer months, when electricity consumption usually peaks.

ACD

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LIFESTYLE Wellness
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

There's more to being an MVP than just winning

By Fran Kangleon

SPORTS IS not the only place for an MVP. It is a title that could apply to anybody—from housewarkers to professionals—capable of unleashing the best in themselves.

Fueled by that principle, Pharmaton has launched a unique endurance race, and to-realized it was celebrating exuberance the brand common modern-day MVPs.

"The Pharmaton MVP Unlimited Challenge is the first-of-its-kind monthlong race that measures the country's best-active soul," said Ostrow Segura, brand manager of the multivitamin and mineral supplement that has been available worldwide for over 40 years.

Segura said the competition, which kicked off on Saturday (March 5) at Serapio Park in Davao, is a cross between treasure and the reality TV shows "The Amazing Race" and "Survivor." Activity obstacles, placed a course in different terrains and the elements, make the 30-day challenge a test of physical and mental endurance.

Five challengers who regularly engage in sports and share a love of the outdoors emerged after Pharmaton's multistation screening process. These are treasurer Anthony Capejo; HR practitioner TJ Ida; full-time dentist Dash Martinez; mom and fitness instructor Papa Reneger; and wife and triathlon pro Monica Torres.

One of them will win the grand prize of half a million pesos, while the second to fifth places will receive P250,000, P150,000, P100,000 and P50,000, respectively.

Home buddy

Race updates, which will be aired weekly on the ABS-CBN news program "TV Patrol," will enable viewers to keep tabs on the challengers' progress and vote for their favorites through the MVP Unleashed Home Buddy Promo. Votes count to texts as much as P150,000.

The bigger reward Pharmaton hopes to share through the MVP challenge, though, is overall well-being, and the motivation to live life to the fullest through balanced physical upgrade and mineral-rich vitamins.

"Filipinos have a tendency to be complacent in general," said Segura. "Pharmaton is trying to promote the idea of taking MVP outside the field of sports and applying it to everyday life."

To make the advocacy relevant to a wider demographic, endorsers Derek Ramsay and Karylle were recently introduced in an "Amazing Race" type event with media participants at the luxury island resort Mindin Bay in Albay.

Perfect match

Diverse interests and the drive to excel have made the two celebrities a perfect match for Pharmaton, said Segura.

"I'm not a serious athlete, in truth than kind of vitamin I feel like I am," said Karylle, who has been taking Pharmaton long before the multivitamin endorsement.

The singer-actress began running immediately only a year ago, but with help from coach Allen Ballesteros, she now runs 10 km distances. Pilates and dance workouts keep her fit, as well, although it is running she credits for doing wonders for her singing.

For Ramsay, a multisport athlete now engaged in competitive Pilates, athletics and fitness have been a lifetime pursuit. "I don't diet, because I've maintained this discipline since I was a little boy, so it's not just now-to-that. I have this physique," he said.

"My dad really pushed me to be in sports, and it helped me be the person I am today. I never got involved with gangs, drugs or the drug scene because I was so focused on sports."

Show biz and fitness are not the only forces that drive both Pharmaton endorsers, who seem very adept at philanthropy.

Ramsay's love of kids moved him to support the education of his "adopted" children. He joins missionaries to far-flung areas to World Vision ambassador and, with the help of actress girlfriend Angelica Panganiban, plans to gather a party for children with autism every Valentine's Day.

Three Kings' party

Karylle foresees an annual project inspired by her recitals, Tadhanglani. She organizes a party for an orphanage on the feast of the Three Kings as a way to raise the children from the overflow of attention during December toward the post-holiday middle of nothing.

The MVP label, Karylle said, is all about the journey toward finding good about oneself. "Cal. Curiosity, when Filipinos are given compliments, they say 'Small moment' or 'Nahahiya naman,' but I prefer to just accept it and be thankful."

"There are different ways to look at being an MVP," she says. "In team sports, it's fascinating that you're put in your shoes, and are able to play in a team, to convince, it wasn't work unless your work with the people around you. That's being an MVP."

KARYLLE and Derek Ramsay use their show biz clout to support charities for kids.

Derek Ramsay and Karylle are driven to excel even beyond the sporting arena—and are inspiring others to do so via a unique endurance race

To join the MVP Unleashed Home Buddy Promo, log four capsules of Pharmaton and submit the receipt via a piece of paper bearing name, address, contact number, e-mail address, signature and the name of your bar from the Pharmaton MVP Unleashed Challenge. Place in a white legal envelope and mail to Accord-Pharmaton, 3F Premier Bldg., #5 San Cipriano Drive, Bagumbayan, Pasig City, 1600. Last day for submissions of entries is April 15.

Visit www.pharmatonmvp.com for race updates and contest mechanics.

THE PHARMATON endorsers go through hanging rope obstacle courses at Mindin Bay in Albay.

ON MVP: says Ramsay, shown in Iligan's race versus Karylle and media guests, is one who puts in his or her share, and is able to play with a team.

Back pain from that heavy bag? This training regimen can help

By Margie C. Enriquez
Contributor

DOES YOUR neck and head jut out like a rooster instead of being upright and erect like a swan? Do the shoulders on the shoulders and low back pain persist despite the labs?

For women, one shoulder tends to be higher than the other—a result of favoring the bag on one side of the body. Hence, the slight to lopsided torso. Inactivity, a highly active lifestyle plus bad posture can render some muscles ineffective, driving other muscles to overexert and become strained. There result is lower performance and, consequently, injury.

Well, the aid of a hanging rod cord and straps, the resource training regimen in Shinola aims to strengthen the weak muscles, improve alignment and provide relief from aches and chronic muscle pain.

Reduced version of suspension exercises using the body weight for resistance against a rod thing. The exercises that from a "fixed" point, then the body raises or moves its weight at one end by pointing down on the other. The workout utilizes the deep internal muscles to maintain balance while the body is moving.

Referred to a cross between performance-oriented training and reconditioning kinesiology.

"We cater to the super-weak to the super-strong," says Christine Almeida, physiotherapist and manager of Optimo, an international chain of Pilates and core-and-movement studios.

Clients are assessed to determine the dormant muscles, weakness in the core (abdominal, back and pelvic muscles that control alignment and move the trunk of the body) and if muscles are misplaced.

"We need to define what muscles need to be stretched or strengthened. Once we spot the imbalances, we can create an individualized program to strengthen the specific muscles," says Almeida.

Proper breathing

The 55-minute workout begins with proper breathing exercises.

"Clients shouldn't hold their breath while working out. It could lead to high blood pressure," says Almeida.

EMBARKING in isometric exercises or strengthening through contraction

ACTIVATING the dangling muscles

The proper body posture is established in the Standing Line, as the client leans forward like a plank against the suspended sling.

"The abdominals are engaged so that every movement throughout the workout is stable and to prevent pain. The trainer-to-client ratio is one-on-one," says Almeida.

The rest of the workout is targeted to the client's requirements. To get a flatter belly and to intensify lower back pain, exercises on a supine position are given while the body is partially suspended.

"The client gets more energy from the correct pivot point, the more challenging," says Almeida.

The program varies from a fast pace to build endurance and work on a muscle, to something more gentle but effective.

Almeida observes that many clients have the forward head posture from slumping in front of the computer.

"This indicates right muscles around the neck. A lot of women also complain of back pain because of carrying their bags on one shoulder. Reduced eventually trains them to get back the posture they're lost and eliminate the pain."

Almeida knows reduced he speaks, as a physiotherapist, he worked in hospitals, had his own clinic in San Pedro, Laguna, and worked as a personal trainer in a top fitness chain for nine years, handling clients whose sessions ranged from weight loss to pain rehab.

He found that the conventional physical therapy methods and weight training had their limitations.

Interplay of muscles

Physical therapy focuses on strengthening the muscles around the weak area, but doesn't delve into the causes. Reduced goes to the root of the problem and the interplay on muscles that enable the joints to move.

For instance, in dealing with knee pain due to being knock-kneed, the program would start with strengthening the large muscles that form the buttocks and

MEDICINE improves coordination, promotes injury and muscle-musculoskeletal disorders. Almeida assists Diehl in strengthening the quadriceps.

move to the inner thighs.

"In gait workouts, Almeida says the hardest and standard ones class tend to shorten the muscles. Injuries occur when gym clients don't apply the proper form and technique.

"Reduced doesn't force you to go beyond what you can't do. In the gym, you push the weight too much that it creates tears in the muscles. With Reduced, you feel energized after a workout and your posture improves."

Optimo instructor Michael Jim Diehl is also a gym veteran. "Some guys have big chests, but if you look closely, one side of the chest is bigger than the other because the other side is weaker. With weights, you could cheat, especially if your posture is lousy. With Reduced, you could immediately feel if you are doing something wrong. There's better isolation of the muscles," he says.

Almeida explains, "If you are working on your chest, you shouldn't let the abdominals, thereby you can focus on your chest muscles as you perform."

Says Diehl, "I think of this as the next big thing. If you do weightlifting exercise like weightlifting, we can lose muscle."

Optimo is located at: TIE Tower 2 BGC Drive, 4th floor, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City. Tel: 555-3494; 553-3194 and 0917-879-6888.

How Pilates can help heal injuries

By Micah Felipe Mendoza
Contributor

LAST MONTH, I met Melanie Byford Young, a dynamic physiotherapist and Pilates master trainer based in the United States. It was the first time she conducted the first rehabilitation Pilates course in the Philippines. She became a major part in teaching and integrating rehabilitation in the existing Pilates program of STOTT Pilates (Richard Morris Merrithew).

I belonged to the first batch of rehab professionals who took the five-day Rehabilitation Pilates course at Vivian Zapanta's Pilates studio. The stated focus of this course was spinal, pelvic and shoulder rehabilitation, as engineers but could be applied to clients with postural problems and/or with existing muscular and orthopedic conditions.

Rehab cool

Nowadays, a lot of people are getting into exercise and sports like running, badminton, golf, triathlon. Many are experiencing different types of injuries, hence the increasing need for some exercises like Pilates, a great tool in rehabilitating one's existing musculo-skeletal problems.

According to Melanie, Pilates applies a holistic approach in developing one's strength, mobility and control to prevent or get over an existing injury. She believes that movement, like Pilates exercises, can help individuals to align their body, properly activate their muscles at the right time and educate them to execute and integrate movements in the most effective way in their everyday planes of motion.

The most common injuries the other encounters in his rehab Pilates practice include disc herniation, shoulder impingement, and cervical spine problems.

For professionals

The new STOTT Pilates Rehabilitation program is designed by professionals like sports and rehab doctors, licensed physical and occupational therapists who assess, treat and prescribe exercises for rehabilitation and prevention of injuries. They can integrate Pilates exercises to their routine.

The STOTT Pilates Rehabilitation program requires participants to consistently apply the learning to their existing patients or clients in the new six modules, before they can take the certification exams.

The integration of Pilates exercises in the prevention and rehabilitation of injuries is a great way to strengthen an effective postural system between orthopedic, rehab doctors and other rehab professionals working in a fitness or clinical setting.

Some of the participants of the rehab Pilates course are currently working in a clinical setting, like Jennifer Peng of Tacpilates and Jude Pacheco of Makati Medical Center. They plan to apply Pilates in their practice. In my case as a personal trainer, I can integrate rehab Pilates in my training sessions with my healthy clients in injury prevention and then apply rehab Pilates to my clients with existing conditions, using more of my knowledge from my physical therapy degree.

Most Pilates instructors already have client degree as sports or rehabilitation, but they can decide to take a rehab Pilates course then can effectively integrate into their practice. Marleen Villas and Mona Valdez are doing that, they took the rehab course and are both Pilates instructors with a medical degree. According to them, the rehab course changed their mindset in dealing with their existing Pilates clients in terms of assessment, exercise prescription and progressions, so they can give them faster results.

USING a Pilates setup to assist and isolate movements

How it works

- Targeted muscle activation. There are some misconceptions about Pilates like using light resistance springs for the client to create a Pilates move, and that one should be able to do all the advanced Pilates moves on. Pilates machines for the exercises to be considered effective. In reality, the less Pilates equipment, the harder the exercise is, since you will be needing less assistance to perform an exercise.

In rehab Pilates, a client can use different Pilates equipment to differentiate positions with exercises or progressions or both, the existing condition and goals of the program. For example, a client can use a strap to maintain a neutral position. This effortlessly fires the deeper muscles of her spine, which is essential in rehabilitating her back problem.

- Breathing and control. We were taught to inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth while keeping the shoulders and other parts of the body in a stable position. One should be able to master proper breathing to have more effective control over the desired movements/patterns necessary for rehabilitating your condition.

So example, learning proper breathing, focusing on lateral expansion of the ribcage and contracting the deep breathing muscles of the torso can be used to decrease muscle tightness and to strengthen muscles in and around the torso.

- Postural correction and re-education. Awareness and necessary correction of one's posture are important in injury prevention and rehab. If you have a forward head, rounded or kyphotic (rounded) spine, tight and weak muscles should be worked on with some exercises to be able to apply systematic correction as a result of comparing properties of prescribed Pilates exercises at least one to three times a week.

- Execution of activity-specific training. Melanie mentioned some important Pilates exercises that should be done twice in between a week to increase sports performance and prevent injuries in some non-sport specific training and vice-versa. Examples are the shoulder bridge for inner thighs and back muscle of the thigh, swimming for the back and improving hip/gluteal traction and single leg stretch to strengthen the oblique/core.

Email the author at micah.lipe@gmail.com

Survivor exhorts patients with colorectal cancer to get early treatment

FOR FOUR years, Alejandro Legaspi dismissed his irregular bowel movement as indigestion. The demands of his job as an engineer for a multinational company made it easy to rationalize his unhealthy lifestyle. He smoked, drank and indulged in a diet rich in red meat. After he retired in 1998, Legaspi experienced his first risky behavior.

Early last year, Legaspi noticed blood in his stool. He considered a doctor and underwent several tests. In March 2010, he was diagnosed with Stage 2 colorectal cancer.

Legaspi was prompted to undergo surgery, where Dr. Marcelino Pejac, a surgeon from Medical Center Manila (MCM), removed Legaspi's tumor and part of the colon and women as well as nearby lymph nodes. After recovering from surgery, Legaspi went through two weeks of radiation therapy in 30 sessions (progressions).

After his radiotherapy, Legaspi underwent chemotherapy, medical oncologist (cancer specialist) Dr. Teresita Sandalan of MCM recommended chemotherapy to reduce the chances of recurrence.

When doctors discuss the treatment appropriate for cancer options with patients, they take into consideration the patient's age, general health, type and size of the tumor, and whether the cancer has spread. Doctors will advise cancer treatment that may include surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

Legaspi says, however, apprehensive about undergoing chemotherapy. Dr. Sandalan prescribed a medicine called capecitabine, a chemotherapy drug to inhibit tumor cells from taken at home. Legaspi was pleasantly surprised that the side effects he experienced were only minor. "The nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhea were readily addressed with medications prescribed by my oncologist. When I felt weak, I could easily rest because I was home.

"Thanks to capecitabine, I was able to undergo several cycles of chemotherapy in the comfort of my own home. The simple daily treatment schedule also allowed me to live a normal life," Legaspi says.

The turning point came when Legaspi had a colonoscopy. In Legaspi's latest quarterly check-up last month, Dr. Sandalan was very happy with the results of his blood tests and CT scan, which all turned out negative.

Today, Legaspi is cancer-free and leads Samaritan Foundation's Bataan chapter. He will be turning his 70th birthday in October. No longer an only an occasional smoker, he has refrained his unhealthy ways and now eats a healthy diet rich in fruits, whole wheat bread and vegetables. He is also a loving husband to his wife Lucy and father to Camille, 36, and Lester, 34.

"God has blessed me with excellent doctors who prescribed the best treatments and a loving family," says Legaspi. He is also grateful for the Roche TFM. Perjanik for helping build his support network. Legaspi urges patients newly diagnosed with cancer to get past the grief and self-pity and seek immediate treatment.

Capecitabine is a chemotherapy drug in tumor-cell inhibitor form. It is indicated for the treatment of colorectal cancer and breast cancer. Capecitabine is a prescription medicine and should only be taken in accordance with the advice of a physician.

This article is part of Roche Philippines' Inc.'s support for Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, which is observed every March. Colorectal cancer is the third leading cause of cancer deaths in the Philippines. Research has also shown that half of all colorectal cancer deaths could be prevented using screening, maintenance and awareness methods that are already available.

WELLNESS TREAT AMID A BUSY WEEK

The Fern at San Benito, an award-winning world-class health resort in Lipa, Batangas, is offering a 24-percent discount on accommodations, meals and beverages, spa and integrated medical services for weekday stays from Sunday through Thursday nights. Starting at P4,900+ for two persons on double occupancy, experience an overnight retreat inclusive of accommodations, healthy gourmet breakfast and afternoon tea, use of swimming pools, gym facilities, meditation pavilions, and participation in complimentary body-mind-spirit activities including Shiva' culinary program class. Call 884-4071 to 73 or cmdn.0916.884.4076 or 09/0.884.8060. E-mail info@thefern.com.ph, reservations@thefern.com.ph or visit www.thefern.com.ph

The day I met a saint

POPE BENEDICT XVI recently announced the beatification of Pope John Paul II on May 1. It is an event eagerly awaited by Filipinos and by all Christendom. The late Polish head of the Catholic Church was definitely the most admired and loved Pope of the modern era. His affection for the Philippines, the only Christian country in Asia, was demonstrated when he visited the country twice, something no other Pope had done before.

Beatification is the last in a steadily long and tedious process before a person is canonized or declared a saint by the Vatican. Pope John Paul II's beatification was announced almost immediately after the first miracle attributed to the late Pope had been declared authentic by medical specialists. It was reported that a Catholic nun suffering from Parkinson's Disease was cured after praying to Pope John Paul II. Doctors declared that the healing could not be explained medically.

Only one more miracle is waiting to be authenticated before Pope John Paul II is finally declared a saint. Since he died, people have been venerating the late Pope like a saint since he died. I witnessed this myself two years ago. I held a seminar at the Pope John Paul II Museum in Warsaw, where a huge bronze statue stands at the entrance. I saw people lighting candles, kneeling and praying before the statue with great reverence and devotion.

The announcement of Pope John Paul II's beatification made me recall my unforgettable experience meeting this great Pope at the Vatican in 1998. I was one of several foreign speakers invited to give a lecture during an international conference on alternative healing in Milan, Italy. More than 600 delegates attended.

After the conference, where I spoke about faith healing and the phenomenon of psychic surgery in the Philippines, our host asked if we would want to meet the Pope at the Vatican. We of course said yes, although I thought he was just joking. It was too good to be true.

There were 15 of us who flew to Rome. At a special hall where the Pope greets thousands of people, about six of the foreign speakers, including myself, were given special passes to talk to the Pope after the ceremony.

Before the Pope appeared, there were thousands of people from all over the world who waited to see and hear him. He greeted each of the delegations gathered there, and that took about an hour. As the Pope greeted each group, they would excitedly shout and clap their hands to acknowledge his greeting. I was only half listening when the Pope said, "Next we would also like to greet those gathered here who are doing psychiatric research, for they are also doing their part to help humanity." I then heard myself spontaneously clapping and shouting "Viva il Papa" together with the rest of my delegation.

I was completely taken by surprise by the Pope's greeting. I didn't realize that the Pope followed international events and knew in the Philippines, the Catholic priests [with a few exceptions] look at my work with great suspicion, if not disapproval. So this statement by no less than the supreme head of the Catholic Church was a welcome surprise indeed.

The next part had the Pope giving special audience to selected groups. We were given passes to go in the front of the big hall to talk to the Pope for a few seconds. The other members of our group were all trained medical doctors, so I shout off, "Nice Holiness, I came from the Philippines." When the Pope heard this, he turned towards me and approached me smiling. I felt his energy so strongly. I almost went into a trance. I was holding a copy of the German edition of my book about the faith healers of the Philippines. I told the Pope, "I would like to give you this book that I wrote about the faith healers of the Philippines."

The Pope acknowledged the gift and said, "Faith healers! We need more in the world today." And when the Pope saw the cover of my book, showing a faith healer performing psychic surgery on a patient, he automatically made the sign of the cross on the book, as though blessing the patient. Then he handed the book to an aide beside him to be raised to other people in the front row.

As we were leaving, I saw a good number of sick people, some of them in wheelchairs, who were lining up for healing, and the Pope was going to them one by one. I was overjoyed! I would've met a saint in my lifetime, and I have two pictures with him to prove it.

INNER AWAKENING

Jonne T. Lacuesco

As the world awaits the beatification of Pope John Paul II on May 1, I remember my unforgettable encounter with this great man

Generics pharmacy hosts medical mission, fellowship

THE GENERICS PHARMACY recently offered free services during Christ's Commission Fellowship (CCF) Cares' Medical Mission in Pasolanong Pasig City.

Together with the CCF Bronze Staff, The Generics Pharmacy rendered not to more than 500 people in need of immediate medical attention. A team of 12 physicians, 16 dentists and 30 medical volunteers and nurses spent their entire day providing free consultations.

Apart from bodily relief, CCF Cares also offered spiritual guidance to patients who need Christ their commitment to God.

According to Jareth Orgaez, promotions manager for The Generics Pharmacy, this clear approach by volunteer groups greatly helps the government address key concerns in health care. "Providing seamless pure IV Iplus with medical attention is a gargantuan task for the government to handle alone. 'It do must; companies like us need to join in reaching out to the underprivileged and help supplement volunteer networks and religious groups."

The Generics Pharmacy is the only drug company in the country that provides customers direct benefits via its own comprehensive pharmacy service program, such as Dial-8-Doc program (731-3333) which connects customers to a doctor on call daily.

As the fastest growing retailer of generic medicines in the Philippines with 1,800 stores nationwide to date, The Generics Pharmacy is also the most established brand in the generics category, assuring customers of wide variety, high quality and very affordable medicines.

Currently offering high-quality imported and locally produced generic medicine for various ailments, the pharmacies' retail company also sells low-priced equivalent drugs, like paracetamol, a medication for fever, for only P 0.60 per tablet, as against the leading brand at P5.

For inquiries, please call telno. 634-3712, 634-6086, 910-8999 loc 43, e-mail customercare@genericspharmacy.com, or visit www.thegenericspharmacy.com.

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From Germany

The Science Behind lipout™

No Catch

Teamwork is key in dragon boat racing

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE OF dragon boat racing is managing team synchronicity. Since there is an gain-exercise for building this, teams that spend more time practicing on water tend to have an advantage.

Basically, there are four phases to proper dragon boat paddling: "catching" or turning your body slightly toward your partners as you lean forward and submerge your paddle into the water; "pulling" as you lean back to pull water; "finishing" as you pull the blade out of the water; and "reaching" as you lean forward again to prepare for your next stroke.

To see what all this is about, watch the Manila Bay Seaports Festival on March 12 and 13, Mounted by Manila Broadcasting Company and the City of Manila, its organizers with the Philippine Navy, Dragon Philippines, Manila Dragons, Triton, Dos Otros Diablos Amigos, De La Salle University, Ateneo de Manila, Philippines, Bay Boat Club, Manila Dragon Paddlers, Manila Ocean Park, Barrow Club Philippines, Maharlika, PYRUS, Asiaviators, Aqua Riders, Blue Phoenix, Cebu Dragons, Globetrotter Sailing Dragons, Regus Philippines, Cambria and Two-time champion FORT Timberjacks.

Coconut sugar—a healthier but no-less-sweet alternative

By Rachel Lim Uy

SO CALLED the "tree of life," coconut has been adapted for practically everything—construction, beverage, and now, even sugar.

In a sugar substitute, nature Sudsero is an all-natural sweetener made with coconut sap, the same material used in making vinegar and kombucha.

But finds a breakthrough discovery, as people have been consuming coconut sap in sugar for years in their own kitchens, it's the first time the product has actually been marketed, courtesy of Chairmer Group Inc.

The process is simple and very traditional, part-owner Hema Magnaye explains. The liquid coconut sap is cooked in a slow fire until it crystallizes. The result is a grainy caramel-colored powder, softer than normal sugar but without the bitter aftertaste of chemically-produced sweeteners.

Doctor recommended

In 1998, Chairmer director Joey Villa suffered an SC vitality stroke, a form of concussion, in the spine. After undergoing four spine operations in two years and another one in 2009, he knew he needed to look into healthier options. Wheelchair bound, he was also steadily gaining weight. Sudsero was a long-in-coming lifestyle.

The company began in 2006 and, a year later, it had installed a facility to properly produce coco sugar. After providing a dozen with 100 boxes to sell which sold out in three months later, Chairmer started marketing itself through medical professionals.

For the owners, being pu

SUDSERO comes in caramel- and cream-colored variants and has no aftertaste.

cleared and recommended by medical professionals is an assurance of the product's quality.

"It's probably the only sugar sweetener taking up doctors' cupboards and being offered to clients," says Villa.

It was only late last year when the ADAD approved Sudsero instead selling coconut-quality in weekend markets and now even in supermarkets. Several restaurants have also replaced sugar with Sudsero in their drinks and desserts.

Chairmer is even looking into expanding the locally produced Sudsero. It's priced at $14 while other "natural" sweeteners fare from $18 to $25.

Ideal for diabetics

Although Sudsero has a 1:1 ratio with sugar in terms of sweetness, the health benefits are a world apart.

For one, cane sugar has a glycemic index (GI) of 68, compared to Sudsero's 35. GI measures the effects of foods on blood sugar levels. High GI signals higher levels of insulin which is harmful to the pancreas. On the other hand, low GI, like Sudsero, breaks down more gradually into the bloodstream, making it ideal for diabetics, says Villa.

In the Philippines, diabetes is expected to rise 150 percent and it's not because of our insatiable sweet tooth.

"White rice, a country staple, increases the risk of type 2 diabetes," says Villa. To counter this, he adds, it's important to reduce the threat in sugar intake.

Sudsero might also want to look at this sweet alternative. Lately Santiago, a partner at Lemon and Lime, which distributes Sudsero, says the demand for no-sugar desserts is pretty strong, especially with the growing health consciousness among Filipinos. Sudsero is 18 calories per serving.

"It's very creamy and it works well with desserts. Sometimes one may need to add [extra sugar] as it's primarily savoury," says Santiago.

It can also substitute for most of coconut flakes on desserts, says Villa. He particular

'It's probably the only sugar sweetener taking up doctors' cupboards and being offered to clients'

PARTNERS Joey Villa and Antonio Magcase (seated) and Vida Panuelos (standing, leftmost) and the rest of the Sudsero team are aiming to distribute the all-natural sweetener in the supermarket.

Practicality

There are seven types of packaging: family-sized Sudsero Big Box with 10 sachets ($9.75), bi-chemical-purpose Sudsero Pouch (Family Pack with 250 sachets/$9.75); Sudsero Mini Box Sachets Tipid Pack, Sachets-10.8-g Pouch, Sudsero 1.5g Pouch (P.9.82) and Sachets-Pro

sumers, which is a creating offerings include.

Each sachet is also made with a thick resealable material for future use. It can also be eaten straight from the package for some touch-needed sugar fix without the high, says Villa.

For more information, visit www.sudsero.com or the Sudsero Facebook page.

10 ways to be slimmer, smarter, sexier

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

From eating more fiber to taking time to count the stars, here's how to look, feel and think better

YES, THERE are countless ways to achieve your health, beauty, and wellness goals. It's not about dieting; it's about lifestyle changes.

1. Mindful eating—It's basic but be aware of what you put in your mouth. Choose lean over fat, raw over cooked, fresh instead of canned. How's a can in point. Grim would binge on others each time she was stressed. She wrote a post on her blog, she decided to go for a final reform. Stress came but way. She became mindful of what she ate. The good news? She lost the weight she gained in two months.

2. Hold yourself up high—slouching affects your mindset. When you "fold inside" yourself, you send a signal to your brain to stay away. Lengthen your spine by sitting and standing upright. This naturally stretches you and pulls in the abdominal muscles. The effect? A longer, taller and more confident you.

3. Be what you love—A certain amount of passion goes a long way. By engaging in activities you enjoy, your endorphin levels will increase, which will help you relax and de-stress.

4. Savor the flavor—Enjoy and relish the food before you. Once you look into the textures and flavor of the food on your plate, you begin to eat with passion. The feeling of delight enhances "feel-good" hormones (endorphins).

5. Do a little stargazing—By doing something you used to enjoy as a child, try focusing on a starry night. This in itself is already relaxing, a great way to neutralize stress. Counting stars while it might appear childish is one of the most pleasant ways to forget your problems. Try it some time.

6. Do the natural fiber—Do you know that vegetables are very high in fiber? If you are not in the mood to munch on greens, there is always psyllium husk. One tablespoon daily mixed with water is enough to prevent constipation. It is also one of the most effective ways to combat cholesterol to to eat cold fashioned whole rolled oats (not the instant quick-cook variety). This is guaranteed.

7. Have an orange—Not only is it high on fiber, but it's also rich in vitamin C, riboflavin and potassium. A wonderful treat before working out or doing brisk physical activity.

8. Sleep!—About 7 ½ hours of complete full sleep for three consecutive nights guarantees the body's deep cycles (still existing). This restores the maximum benefits of stage 4 sleep, combined the most rejuvenating and immunity-boosting levels.

9. Beauty power—The very sight of flowers is enough to appease your senses. When the eyes are a beautiful bouquet of flowers, this sends signals to the brain. The result? A pleasant feeling.

10. Savor enjoyment—The flavonoids in dark chocolate have a soothing effect on the nerves. If not eat 1/4 oz of the dark (not milk chocolate) carefully for two weeks, you can effectively control your stress hormones. Dark chocolate is a better mood enhancer than a tranquilizer. What's more, it's tasty, too!

Orange peel scrub

Create an orange peel...skin. orange over mixed with 1 tbsp of olive oil makes for an exfoliating, toning scrub. Rub throughout your body. Smell as tangy goodness to stimulate the senses, and more!

AFFIRMATION—"I can all that I can be."

Love and light!

ENTERTAINMENT

Edna Emma G. Velarde

NY auction for Clapton guitars

NEW YORK—More than 70 guitars belonging to British music icon Eric Clapton go on the auction block next week to raise money for his drug and alcohol treatment center in the Caribbean. The instruments include a 2005 Fender Stratocaster Signature Model expected to sell for up to $50,000. Clapton's used during the May 2005 Crossroads concert in London. Reuters

DID YOU KNOW...

Rock station opens door to young bands

TONIGHT is the night for four young musicians huddled in a small waiting room with no walls. Uh, wait, there are walls; they're just barely visible under voluminous, convoluted graffiti. (Only the space for a revered John Lennon poster is spared.)

Zoro Leonard T. Pascua, Allan D' Abdalla, Michael Joseph M. Vargas and Carlos Nikolai R. Velarde are members of the band Dagon (Hebrew for "grunty"). They have played in small gigs since being featured in January and, as they relate without embarrassment, they have "1400 fans, thanks to Facebook."

Needless to say, the band is unsigned. But they have four original songs, one of which they have recorded in a proper studio. That song has brought them here, a first little step toward a big goal. They're waiting now with mostly audible rumblings on the walls is that of UB (Unwind and Radio) 101.9 FM, whose chosen fare is modern and classic rock music.

Spotlight

Dagon's "Valo" is getting the spotlight as song of the week in "Local Highlight," a programming feature/adventure. This means UB talent station of KISS will play the song six times daily for seven straight days. Tonight, the boys and their song take a bow via an interview with DJ Nick Zingo during the program. "Funny story! Count them," Nikolai is say, they are beyond excited."

The 4-year-old station launched "Local Highlight" two years ago. RJ Jacinto II, general manager, says the effort, essentially, is to level the playing field between signed and unsigned local bands in terms of airplay.

"There is a lot more to the Pinoy music industry than is heard on radio," Jacinto, 31, says. "The Philippines has so much talent that got so little support. UB wants to help, that's all."

The endeavor has, in fact, helped more than 1,000 groups—some more than others, to be sure, but limited records issues; "Local Highlight" has imparted the same vibe to all: "This station wants to be your voice."

Just waiting

Though Jacinto grew up in a household that respected a passion for rock and roll 'n' roll, he says, "Only when we started UB did I actually see there were so many Filipino bands waiting to be heard."

He remembers "going to Rizza (ILL a bar" as a kid, and seeing how much music made people happy. He likewise recalls: "When ever my dad [Francisco "RJ" Jacinto] and I walked by musicians playing on the street he wore change, he always gave them something. He always told me that he had a soft spot for Filipino musicians, and that they were all gifted."

In the very least, Jacinto said, he would like listeners to have a better idea of the wealth of material out there. He knows UB is making a dent, small though it may be. "When we hear from listeners such requests as, 'Hey guests, pala? Parang di nanag lokal (We have stuff like that to listen to and to say)'—is that a good or bad observation? I don't know. It's enough for me that people are made aware of how rich and diverse the scene is."

It's music, Jacinto notes, that silenced, because many musicians in both small and big establishments are Pinoy. "Foreigners conclude that our music industry must be jumping, fank. I'm sure we'll get richer. And when that time comes, we'd like to be able to say we did our part."

Booth banter

From his booth now, it would seem that DJ Nick is harmony with Dagon; actually, he's skillfully fawning over the band's story.

All four guys are Music Music Technology students of St. Scholastica's College. Carlos, songwriter and lead guitarist, shared he's a rabbit with Twin Lobster, 2008 NU Rock Awards' College Band of the Year. He participated in the national songwriting workshop "Elemento," last November in Dumaguete City. Zoro, vocalist and rhythm guitarist, wondered Carlos' audition piece for that workshop. It becomes, drummer Allan and bassist Michael, Carlos' former band mates from another group, MetaGap, same co-board.

Their song "Sala (Thirst)," Carlos explains to DJ Nick, is about people in (too-blind relationships who do not talk about their problems, and would rather let the disconnect fester. It's got a good hook and, very important, when the demo reached UB, it was airplay-ready.

ROOK GO

DJ NICK Zingo interviews members of featured new band, Dagon.

IT'S A HAPPY NIGHT Humming to go after the radio debut of Dagon's first song, "Sala" (from left): Carlos Velarde, DJ Nick, Michael Vargas, Zoro Pascua and Allan Abdullah

'There's a lot more to the Pinoy music industry than what is heard on radio'

RJ JACINTO II (and John Lennon) at UB's graffiti wall: "This country has so much talent that gets so little support."

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Q: What results can we expect from these treatments?
A: Expect your skin to be brighter, smoother and younger-looking. Your unsightly pigmentation, age spots and dark marks will be cleared out and you'll look 5 years younger, at the least. These treatments help maintain healthy skin, as well. They're highly recommended if you want your skin to remain clear, re-energized and in top condition. You're guaranteed to look better than ever.

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Rock station opens door to young bands

From page 04

Jacinto points out: "We receive about 20 demos a week and, as much as we want to give every single one air time, most of them are too raw. We definitely search for and select musicians, but the jobs made much easier if the demos are studio-recorded."

(This often unveils into good songs ... in bad demos," DJ Nick would later add. "We send them messages suggesting that they invest in demo music ...")

Other wise, Jacinto says, the demos that don't make the cut for "Local Highlight" are played in the Sunday program "Pinoy Rock 'N' Roll Hits." He adds, "Also, every New Year's Day ... for the past three years now, we have rebels are still 'In Deep' or 'Bonus Day,' when selected demos get done."

Of those bands that have made it to the "Local Highlight" ranks, Jacinto says, "About 99 to 50 percent are unsigned ... and for most, it is their first time on radio."

Prospects

What are the prospects for promising newbies like Dugaire?

Jacinto is not one to brag. "There are groups that from the province. Aliwe are feature them, they start getting gigs in Manila, or in other key cities," he says. "I'd be careful to withdraw their good fortune we, truly to their appearance on UB, however. Different groups evolve differently. Some are more determined than others."

Yes, and some are, plain and simple, luckier.

Landing coveted recording contracts via the "Local Highlight" route is not exactly a realistic expectation, Jacinto admits. "Our signed-artists music is extremely limited at this time. And, in any case, it is not among UB's objectives to figure in that landscape."

The guys of Dugaire are taking it one day at a time. "Our first song is getting heard online, radio—for a whole week," says Carlos. "Then secondly be good."

Interns A. Velarde

Jazz fest diary 2: Bob James, Hubert Laws, world music

HUBERT Laws and his handplay a mix of classical and jazz at Rockwell Tent; at right, the group Freestyle delights the crowd at the same venue.

GINGER Debra Laws jams at the festival gala night at Ayala Museum.

Feb. 25, Rockwell Tent

The 2011 Philippine International Jazz Festival is on its last few frenetic gigs. London-based Malika Adaeze and New York-based saxophonist Jon Irabagon, winner of the latest Thelonious Monk Jazz Competition, are Irabagon's performances hard bop take on "When I Fall in Love" and Adaeze' stand-up of the Tingsing Jonathan "Child So Jay" and a Spanish love song were the undercurrents.

Brandon—keyboardist Bill Laurie, bassist Nathan East, guitarist Chuck Loeb—dazzled us with tracks from "Everyday" (1981), "Between the Sheets" (1983), "Sri, Please" (2000), and in fact, "Let's Touch the Sky" (2010).

But the best is yet to come, as the band plays the familiar "Soft Rain" and "After the Dance." The group gets everyone on their feet with James' 1975 classic "Westchester Lady."

Capping the night are fans lining up for autographs on vinyl and CD albums. Their smiles say it all—what a great evening!

Philip M. Aurrez, Contributor

Feb. 27, Rockwell Tent

"Rock 'n' roll ain't nothing but jazz with a hard back beat," says Bill Bichnell of The Rolling Stones in his autobiography, "Life." The statement echoes in our mind as we take in the interlocking sounds from the bands on the bill.

San Fernando-based Carlos Zialcita evokes serenades through his harmonica, which sounds like a saxophone. Pianist Rey Cabanbal, bassist Colby de la Cuesta and drummer Mat Ilicsy take turns spicing up the mood, which ranges from blues (Horace Silver) to sentimental (Didier Dilegente).

Another DJ-based Pinoy, Bellcloud, offers some cruising house moves on his classical palate. It's no-no pick, but his plucking is still functional enough.

Jacqui Rodrigo experiences with a mod R&B revision of "Can Ya Get You Into My Life." She Can't-le joins her for some duets, but they get lost in the lyrics and fidings get a bit confusing to match the middle.

The music handles American flutist Hubert Laws, musicians his sound with a sophisticated bent. He studied classical music; mixed with jazz, it's pure bliss, bringing Igor Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring" and Tchaikovsky's "Romeo And Juliet." It doesn't get boring. Enough. Proof is "Land of Promise" and its counterpart, "Lady-wips."

AMERICAN guitarist Chuck Stevens channels Wes Montgomery.

JAWA'S Sindayan/Silvesti Boys play the ensalza, a traditional three-stringed banjo.

Hubert's sister, Debra, delights with supple vocals on the R&B grooves of "Fake Tatoos," "Very Special" and "Sunday."

"Imagine yourself in a movie house without the picture," says Hubert to introduce one number. The band—pianist David Hungate, keyboardist Bob Mullins, bassist John Leftwich and drummer Ndugu Chancler—begins an excellent interplay as the sounds of saxophone, serious, wah and a dream sequence weave in and out. The surreal picture is electric, spells intensity. Pachelo Concepcion

Feb. 28, Ayala Museum

It's gala night. Wine is served and the party is in full swing. Jazz is showcased in all its forms.

The experimental fusion style of Pinoy guitarists Paolo Magpayo provides an interesting contrast to easy listening pieces by smooth operator Rey Cabanbal (classical guitarist Ric Manuel, Noel Cabangon's drummer take on Yoyo Capulong's "Tony Gumba ng Isang Milyonaryo," and Malika Adaeze's reprise of "Child So Jyo" and a Spanish love song-duet caper applause. Jon Irabagon plays hard bop again. US guitarist Chuck Stevens channels Wes Montgomery.

Korean percussion quartet Jang Hyeong provides world music sounds—combining guitar and harmonica with traditional instruments like the hanbon-drum and the jenggo (a traditional drum).

A slow stopper is Jaguar's Sindanai Sireni Boys playing the ancient traditional three-stringed "sandaya." These guys are not only good musicians, they are funny as well with their antics.

The excitement reaches fever pitch as Pinoy guitarists Johnny Alegre and his band tributary vents up with Carlos Zialcita on harmonica to deliver a high-energy blues number with Malika.

The evening ends with Sandra Lim Ilboy singing the first verse of "Fake Tatoo" to introduce the original rounder, Debra Laws.

But it's not over yet. The pulsating rhythms of Pinoy band Ilaw Lamin blast until late midnight.

Philip M. Aurrez, Contributor

McLean's sad songs a joy to hear

Text and photos by Pachelo Concepcion

FIRST, a word on the flute act, Alex Ferguson. She's been doing well as a guitar playing singer, no doubt. But is would be better if she starts building up her original repertoire and not keep relying on her apparent influences, like The Beatles-heads, for her live gigs.

It's been ages since "Popular ng ng Paraiso," and she couldn't even perform it because she said she had a cold. Being unable to memorize even lyrics is no excuse, sticks. Hey chief backup guitarist is the talented composer Mike Villegas.

But the less original stuff in her albums, right? So why not do those, aside if she's opening for foreign artists?

Which leads us to Don McLean. The guy is 65, and he said he's been touring for over 40 years. But look, she sings for her reclusive fans around the rest of time.

At his Araneta Coliseum concert last week, the US singer-songwriter presented a show that seemed more country than folk-rock. Then again, those genres have things in common and it wasn't off putting at all.

HEP RoPLIN Rodriguez dances to "American Pie."

FINDS' folk music legend Gary Granada enjoys the show with a female companion.

DRUMMER Douglas Grose, bassist Ralph Childs, guitarist Carl Kippstrasz

A TRIUMPHANT Don McLean acknowledges the crowd's lusty cheers at the end of his concert at the Araneta Coliseum.

McLean's opener, a cover of Buddy Holly's "Everyday," dreamy, strained this. Hello, an influences of many music idols. Justifiably, McLean's accomplished the roots of rock 'n' roll, which is a marriage of country and R&B.

Lower pitch

It was understandable that McLean sang one of his own hits, "If Me Try," in a lower pitch, as an improvised blues vein. He was simply doing it as somebody who has aged with grace.

In some numbers, he was discovering new rhythm like a baby's blossom, to others he sounded like Bob Dylan.

His cover of "Take Time" was a nice surprise. It took us back to the Clapton's version—but McLean's forward closure to the song's cosmic roots.

Then he also did "Love Theme" underscored his love of country, his folks, it's not once at all that this is an original by the band work bassist Kasserole. For the record, "Love theme" was recorded by The Royal Brothers in 1960 and was written by Boudleaux Bryant, who likewise co-wrote "All I Have to Do Is Dream" and "Bye Bye Love." Bring these names to your mind and deduce their connection with country music.

All in hearing Hubert do Roy Orbison's "Crying" and more sad songs, we felt depressed. Intermight, many heartbed, dreamy love songs are indeed supreme items of artists who have made quite unhappy experiences.

McLean's "Vincent" could be depressing, too. And the lyrics are just so lovely and laced with poetic's that it made everyone joyful to recall the images.

When "American Pie" came on, a guy who turned out to be Cerpenic de Gre Rep. Rufus Rodriguez couldn't control himself and danced to the music. In the sidelines, Pinoy folk music legend Cory Granada and composer Ryan Cayabyab were spotted having a good time as well. McLean sounded tired, but he had thousands of his Pinoy fans helping him out with the epic lyrics—no matter if it was, again, a sad song.

Fans stay, cry in the rain as Sugarfree says goodbye

By Allan Policarpio
Contributor

RAIN fell just as Sugarfree front man Ebe Dancel, bassist Jal Tagalbas and drummer Raku Quizumbing were down to go on stage at Eastwood Central Plaza last week for the band's farewell concert, "Padare, Pilipinas."

The crowd didn't let nature's deterrents spoil it, though, as the chance for the three men proved to be too emotional.

In a brief presser earlier, the guys declared the show to all those who supported their career—fans who bought their albums and attended their gigs. Ebe couldn't even enough how grateful he was. Given a chance, he said, he would present a new way to say "thank you." Instead, he promised to give back the favor the night by doing what the band did best—play great music. "Pangarap kami na gawing sulo ang buhay," Ebe said. And they did.

SUGARFREE frontman Ebe Dancel

Affecting music

"Pinoy" was met with deafening screams. A couple of songs later, the topsiill harder but the crowd stayed put. When Ebe asked if everyone was OK, a group shot back, "Kahit hanggang sa!"

For Ebe, Sugarfree's legacy is simply their music. "We're just normal guys. All we wanted to do was to play in '70s bands and Maprin's," said with a set of old and new favorites such as "Ung Bebas" "Kung Ayaw Mo Na Sa Akin," "Bilipinas," "Sun-ng Isiday," "Hangover," and "Maniposa," the band gave the crowd a lot of great memories to relish.

During breaks, the band members gave final messages to their families and fans. Raku said the fans were his source of strength. Jal, cyclist and former presidente of UP Manila, thanked his students. Ebe urged the fans to keep supporting local bands. But before things could turn into a big sap fest, the crowd chanted, "Group hug! Group hug!" which lightened up the mood before the last song, "Bitaw."

Earlier, Jal was asked which Sugarfree song would he like to still be playing on the radio 20 years from now? He said it would be "Bumuo," one of the band's definitive works for its "simple yet profound lyrics," and the way it "just everybody singing."

He was right. As soon as "Bumuo" kicked in, the crowd let out its loudest cheers, then sang along, from the very first line. With the words "O kay sugal dat kitang nimahal / O kay sugal dat kitang mamahalin," those established fans knew a more perfect farewell song after Sugarfree's 12-year journey with us fans.

As the crowd cried, and roared, "Sugarfree! Sugarfree!" Ebe, Jal and Raku stood shoulder to shoulder and took a final bow.

SUGARFREE'S frontm, Jal Tagalbas, and his ukulele-inserted song is "Bumuo."

THE BAND'S original drummer Mhoon Singson joins on a few numbers.

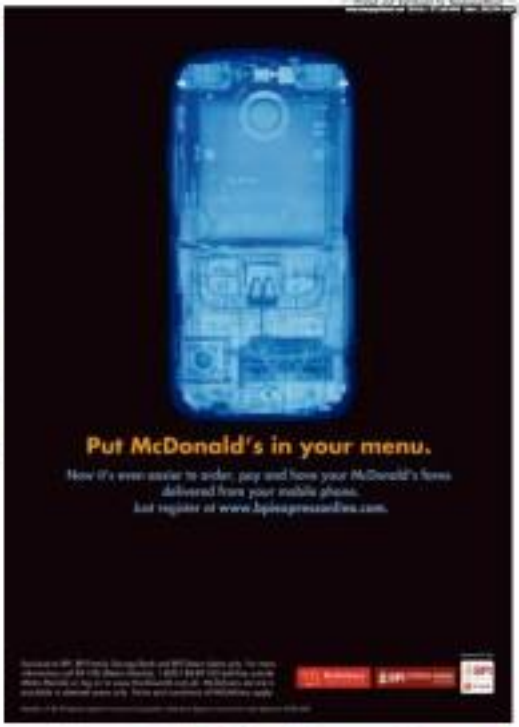
ENTERTAINMENT

STONE: Temple Pilots, which reunited in 2008, performs tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum.

Why Pinoys still clamor for Stone Temple Pilots

QFM president Ogie Alcasid says talent show will determine the winners in the nationwide singing contest "QFM@Popstar."

McDO Bluers join with the Sesame Street gang in a new educational campaign.



GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

A. UPIN BY JESS ABRERA

PUGAD BAIDOY BY PAL LARGOZA

DICK TRACY

LOVE BOOTS BY ELIZABETH HOCHOCO-LO

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

RIKO MACHINE BY MARK ABRERA

SEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

MUTTS

SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY

DUSTIN BY STEVE KELLEY AND JEFF PARKER

TULDOK BY MARA COLI

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS GRAVE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Within the next month, your workload is going to expand hugely! You won't know everything about every-thing, but you'll be relying on gaining the goodwill of others and will encounter no end of difficulty.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Your ability to disconnect and to live in your own skin will be quite considerable in the next several weeks. Take some deep breaths. That's between you and your shrink.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21) Financial activities, especially those with younger people, will delight you now. You feel rejuvenated and re-energized by hanging out with this younger gang. (And why can't they? And not homeless.)

CANCER (June 22 to July 22) Financial matters, especially those with younger people, will delight you now. You feel rejuvenated and re-energized by hanging out with this younger gang. (And why can't they? And not homeless.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Explore new ideas. Travel is one option. Study new subjects. Talk to people from different countries and cultures. Avoid entanglements. You are eager to know more about every-thing!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Discussions about interpersonal issues, debt and shared property will go well in the weeks ahead. You're ready to do your homework. Indeed, you enjoy research. Investigate the question that comes to the screen.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 23) Discussions with partners and close friends will be lively and compelling in the next few weeks because Mercury is already opposite your sign. Talk out your issues. Delay major decisions.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 to Nov. 21) You're irresistible during periods of work and play the next few weeks. Be open to ideas from colleagues and employers. You might even befriend one of them.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Your creative juices are flowing now! You'll love new ideas about sports, the entertainment industry, children, gambling, real estate and hospitality industry. You'll be psychic, prophetic and fortuitous!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) This month is a good time to tackle disagreement or to make important decisions about family matters.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) They're very keen to enlighten others about something new and to the next few weeks. It's a great time to write, edit, market or communicate any-thing.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Trust your instincts during these next few weeks. Your ability to read between the lines is good. You're also remarkably mindful of your purchases.

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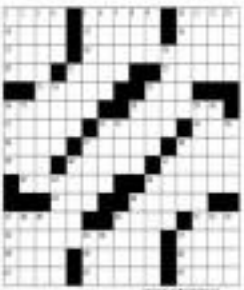
			1		5			
		4	8	9	7	1		
		1				9		

Difficulty level: ★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Why fans are eager...

From page E1

become future programming on Disney Asia. Log on to wowowowee.disney.com.

'OPM@Pagcor'

Organizations og Pilipinong Musikero (OPM) president Ogie Alcasid believes that the singing contest "OPM@Pagcor" is another useful idea that deserves the widest support.

Established 76, Metrowide launch for The Total OPM Performance," the competition is the state gaming agency's response to President Noynoy Aquino's directive for Pagcor to help promote and advance OPM's advocacies.

Asked how the contest differs from other talent searches on TV, Ogie said that it will not have any one winning. "Singing galing mo lang ang hanapin. So more, but then again, no less than that."

"OPM@Pagcor" is open to all amateur Filipino singers or persons with dual citizenship who are at least 18 years old. Applicants for the competition should not have been any singles prior to any national singing contest.

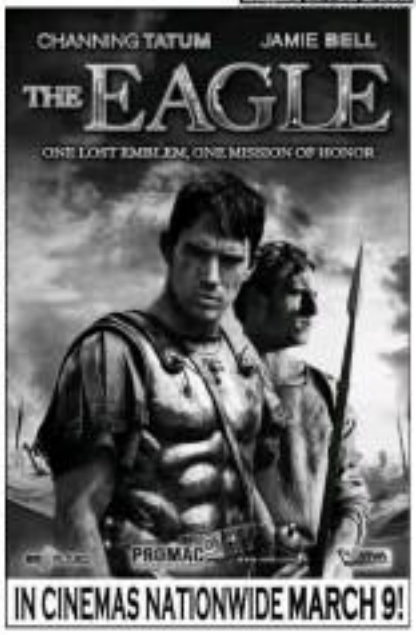
At stake is ₱500,000 in cash, a recording contract with a major label and another contract to perform at Pagcor's Casino Filipino branches. Log on to www.pagcor.ph or www.opm.org.ph.

New endorsers in concert tour

After the breakup of Rainbow and changes in the members of mydestiny, corporate sponsor Smirnoff Ice Beer announced its latest "Pick Five" endorsers who will go on a 30-date nationwide concert tour. "Wolf

SANDWICH

gang and Parokya ni Edgar. Joining them are three hotlovers—Chicosci, Sandwich and Autechrè. The tour kicks off March 25 in Bulacan.



MOVIE TIME

GLORIETTA 4

1) I AM NUMBER FOUR (3D)
2) SHANGHAI / DRIVE ANGRY (3D)
3) THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU
4) NEVER LET ME GO
5) JUST GO WITH IT
6) WHO'S THAT GIRL
7) INSIDE

GREENBELT 1

1) WHO'S THAT GIRL
2) THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU

GREENBELT 3

1) THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU
2) I AM NUMBER FOUR (3D)
3) NEVER LET ME GO
4) UNKNOWN / BLACK SWAN
5) FASTER

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1) THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU
2) I AM NUMBER FOUR (3D)
3) WHO'S THAT GIRL
4) UNKNOWN
5) FASTER

AYALA CENTER CEBU

1) THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU
2) FASTER
3) DRIVE ANGRY (3D)
4) WHO'S THAT GIRL

MARQUEE

1) I AM NUMBER FOUR
2) THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU
3) FASTER
4) WHO'S THAT GIRL

MARKET! MARKET!

1) DRIVE ANGRY (3D)
2) FASTER
3) THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU
4) TEMPORARILY CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
5) TEMPORARILY CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
6) WHO'S THAT GIRL
7) I AM NUMBER FOUR

TRINOMA

1) WHO'S THAT GIRL
2) JUST GO WITH IT
3) I AM NUMBER FOUR (3D)
4) SHARK ATTACK / DRIVE ANGRY (3D)
5) BLACK SWAN / UNKNOWN
6) FASTER
7) THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU

Reserve your tickets by texting SureSeats to 2910 (for Globe and Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729-7777

MOVIE SPECIAL

NOW SHOWING AT GLORIETTA 4 & GREENBELT 3 CINEMAS

"The Best Movie I've Seen This Decade"

NEVER LET ME GO

★★★★

MALL EVENTS

GLORIETTA
Project Makeover Live at Glorietta
March 20, 11:00 a.m.
Glorietta 5 Atrium

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
One Love Team Big Comeback
March 11 | Makoa

MARKET! MARKET!
Dragon Martial Arts Live
at Market! Market!
March 27, 11:00 a.m.
Activity Center

AYALA CENTER CEBU
Art Installation Exhibit: A Celebration of Fashion
Exhibit by Asia's international and renowned party outfits, accessories, and fashion-related memorabilia from...
March 18-20 | Activity Area

TRINOMA
Film Making Workshop
March 10-13 | Activity Center

MARQUEE
Mr. Pen Painting Workshop
March 17 | Activity Center

CINEMAS
Mr. Bean March 4-20
Pre-Screening & Autograph
please call 752-7301 ext 62

MALL SPECIAL

Ash Wednesday Mass
March 9, 12 noon
3rd Level, Home Market!

glorietta | GREENBELT | TOWN | AYALA CENTER CEBU | Trinoma | MARQUEE

Visit www.ayalamalls.com.ph or text AYALA MALLS to 2948

Cristine's rebuttal on Sarah issue

EVERYBODY was shocked to read Sarah Geronimo's **tell-all interview** in an entertainment magazine. For the first time, she talked about her **frustrated romance** with Dingdong Dantes. What are the sentiments of Dingdong's girlfriend, Cristine Reyes, regarding the issue?

SARAH Geronimo

No, not long ago, Cristine **came out a campaign** vs. Sarah in Twitter/Friendster. "Chat naman sa article on di kami pinagsabay ni Sarah. Di naman dahil ang gusto kong hindi na ito ni Sarah. Sa ni Ana," Cristine explains.

"Hindi ko si Ana. Hindi po ako. Sa ni Ana. Ang gusto ko lang ay **respetuhin** ang isa't isa. Respetuhin niya kami at respetuhin kami. Yun na do-what-you-want. Pero **huwag** nang **idamay** ang pangalan ko. Yun lang naman ang hiling ko